

THE BEAUTIFUL STORY.



A COMPANION BOOK TO THE HOLY BIBLE.

CONTAINING A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF ALL THE EVENTS RECORDED IN THE SACRED BOOK, ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY, FOR THE CHILD, STUDENT, MINISTER, AND THE EASY UNDERSTANDING OF ALL WHO LOVE GOD.

DESIGNED TO INCREASE OUR INTEREST IN A STUDY OF THE BIBLE, AND TO GIVE A BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND IMMEASURABLE LOVE FOR THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

Golden Gems of Religious Thought

INCLUDING NUMEROUS SELECTIONS FROM GREAT WRITERS AND SPEAKERS, FOR FIRESIDE READING, SACRED REFLECTION, THE ELEVATION AND HAPPINESS OF THE HOME CIRCLE, AND TO POINT THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

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THE BEAUTIFUL STORY is a book conceived in an hour of solemn meditation upon sacred things. From my youth the Bible has been to me a volume of revelations; a repository of divine knowledge that can only be unlocked by the key of faith and love; a grand conservatory of precious growths in the garden of human nature; a treasury of illimitable gifts of God's providence; a record of relationship between the Holy Spirit and mankind; all of these, and yet more; for in it we perceive the handwriting of Deity tracing a history of the race from birth to death and regeneration, and to the glory of a reunion with the eternal Fatherhood.

God speaks in all tongues and through all things, yet the original Bible was given us, common heritage as it is, through the medium of only two languages, the Hebrew and Greek. The English-speaking people have therefore to accept the versions of appointed translators, which give rise to differences, not always material but often confusing, since it is not possible to preserve the sense and idea of an original writer in a literal translation.

Thus the aid of commentaries becomes necessary, and yet, as each commentator has to rely upon his individual interpretation of history, and his translation as well, it follows as a natural consequence that there now exists a wide divergence of opinions among learned men in the interpretation of the Scriptures, that scarcely stops short of the methods of true worship and even of the means of salvation itself. While we may deplore, we cannot avoid this result, and must therefore be content to search the Scriptures for ourselves, with an

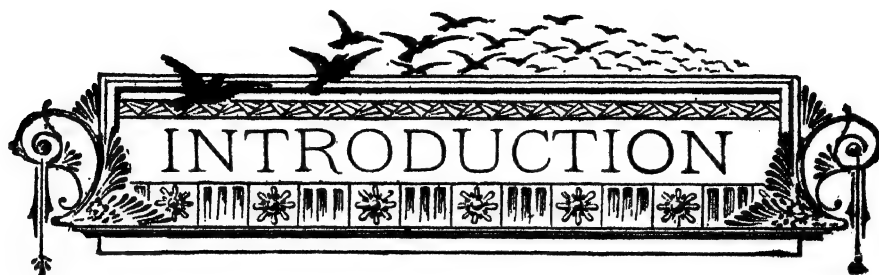
abiding faith that God will help us to read aright His precious words, and lead us ever in the path of duty and obedience to His commands as we understand them.

I have sought to aid those interested in the Bible, in my humble way, by striving to bring into prominence many of the sublime beauties of the Holy Book that lie half covered under the shadow of the antique, if not obsolete, language of the text. But while attempting this, I have prayerfully endeavored to avoid doing violence to the established opinions of any denomination, respecting all beliefs alike, and holding specially sacred the truth as revealed by God, according to my understanding. My purpose, in pursuance of this resolve, has been to present a modern narrative of the Holy Scriptures, following the history as related by the Bible, except occasional changes which appeared to be useful in preserving the sequence of events and proper chronological arrangement, as well also the harmony, *morale*, and unmarred beauty of the story.

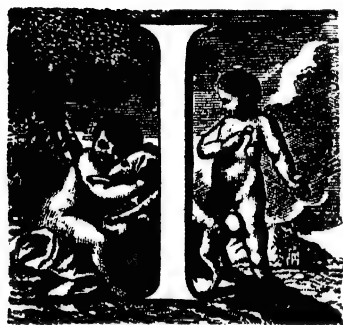
Beyond this, however, I have essayed to present the narrative in a manner and style most readily understood, for which purpose I have added from time to time such explanatory comments as would serve to render clear those texts which otherwise appear confusing. Nearly all the prominent characters of the Bible are described also in profane history, where we find many revelations quite as instructive, that enable us to better understand those passages of Scripture which sometimes excite doubt in the mind of the casual Bible reader. From these corroborative sources have I drawn largely, and with such borrowed light have I attempted to illuminate the entire narrative, that every portion may appear plain to the comprehension, not only of students of the Bible, but of children as well.

To the more profound scholars of sacred history, such as Josephus, Dr. Smith, Thomson, Beecher, and a hundred others whom I have consulted in the preparation of this book, I beg to make my acknowledgments, and to confess that without their aid I should have felt so poorly qualified for the really pleasurable task of writing *THE BEAUTIFUL STORY* that I would never have attempted it. While exercising critical regard for exactness in the purely historical features of the book, I have endeavored to so write the story that all who read it will not only gather useful lessons therefrom, but will be also stimulated to a greater interest in the Bible and a stronger love, a better faith, a more perfect obedience, and a constantly growing devotion to God, in whose service may this effort of mine lead many to enter, is the earnest prayer of

THE AUTHOR.



INTRODUCTION



AM here to let down the bars, so that the flock of lambs and sheep may easily get into the green pastures of this book. Its binding sumptuous, its type luxurious, its pictures so many revelations, and its style of thought and expression captivating, *THE BEAUTIFUL STORY* will have an unlimited mission for good. A well-written book that will entertain young people, will interest the middle-aged and the old, so that while the boy will put down his bat and the girl her lawn-tennis racket to read this book, the octogenarian, having adjusted his eye-glass No. 9, will read the story from lid to lid. Books for the young are generally too elaborate or too simple, and the forage for the lambs is either too high in the hay-rack or down under foot. This book strikes the medium. When our older people were children there was no juvenile literature. If the book-appetite arose, they were fed on a slice of Wilberforce's "Practical View of Christianity," or little tid-bits from Edwards "On the Affections," or were given a few nuts to crack from Chalmers' "Astronomical Discourses." Their fathers and mothers sighed lest these little ones should turn out badly because they liked ginger-snaps better than the Westminster Assembly's Catechism, and would spend their money for marbles when it ought to have gone toward furnishing red flannel shirts for the poor heathen in Kamtchatka. You lost all faith in John Bunyan's veracity, and whistled incredulously when you came to that story about Apollyon. Pictures were scarce, and a book was considered profusely adorned that had at the beginning a sketch of the author in gown and bands and long hair of powdered whiteness, and at the close, in ornate letters, the word "*Finis*," which you were told meant *The End*, although, after wearily reading it through, you did not know whether it was the end of the book or the end of you. You might as well feed your baby on lobster salad as at that early age to have been expected to digest the books that were set before you.

But now the youth's library is filled with books of large type and tasteful vignette, and lids ridged and flowered and scrolled and columned and starred with all the fascinations of book-bindery. There is now danger that what is called "milk for babes" shall become nothing but chalk and water. Many of the Sabbath-schools are doing much to foster a taste for trashy literature. In some of these libraries you find sentimental love-yarns; biographies of generals who were very brave and good examples in some respects—when they were sober; fairy stories in which the fairies had very low morals; accounts of boys and girls who never lived—books in which there is no more religion than in Don Quixote or Gulliver's Travels. We have been wondering why some religious society did not publish a nice little edition of Baron Munchausen, with a moral at the end showing our dear little people the danger of tying their horses to the top of a church-steeple.

On Sunday night your child does not want to go to bed. He cries when compelled to go, and looks under the bed for some of the religious hobgoblins that come out of the Sunday-school library. Religious spooks are just as bad as any other kind of spooks. A child is just as afraid of Floras, Pomonas, sylphs, oreads, and fairies, as of ghosts. The poor little darling in the blue sack goes home with a book thinking she has heaven under her arm, and before she gets through reading the story of love and adventure feels so strange that she thinks she must be getting lots of religion.

In the choice of our children's books let us not mistake slops for simplicity, nor insult our children's tastes by disquisitions about "footsy-tootsies," or keep informing them of the historical fact—which they learned a great while ago—that "Mary had a little lamb," or assemble the youngsters in coroner's jury to clear up the mystery as to "Who killed Cock Robin?" If a child has no common sense at seven years of age, it never will have.

Have at least one book in your library in which all the good children did not die. My early impression from Sunday-school books was that religion was very unhealthy. It seemed a terrible distemper that killed every boy and girl that it touched. If I found myself some day better than common, I corrected the mistake, for fear I should die, although it was the general opinion that I was not in much danger from over-sanctity. But I do believe that children may have religion and yet live through it. A strong mustard-plaster and a teaspoonful of ipecac will do marvels. Timothy lived to grow up, and we are credibly informed that little Samuel woke. Indeed, the best boys I ever saw occasionally upset things and got boisterous and had the fidgets. The goody-goody kind of children make namby-pamby men. I should not be surprised to find that a colt which does not frisk becomes a horse that will not draw. It is not religion that makes that boy sit by the stove while his brothers are out snow-balling; but the "dumps." The boy who has no fire in his nature may, after he has grown up, have animation enough to grease a wagon-wheel, but he will not own the wagon nor have money enough to buy the grease. The best boy I ever knew before he

went to heaven could strike a ball till it soared out of sight, and in the race, far as you could see, you would find his red tippet coming out ahead. Look out for the boy who never has the fingers of a good laugh tickle him under the diaphragm. The most solemn-looking mule on our place had kicked to pieces five dashboards.

There are parents who notice that their daughter is growing pale and sick, and therefore think she must be destined to marry a missionary and go to Borneo, although the only recommendation she has for that position is that she will never be any temptation to the cannibals, who, while very fond of cold missionary, are averse to diseased meat; or, finding their son looking cadaverous, think he is either going to die or become a minister, considering that there is great power of consecration in liver complaint, and thinking him doubly set apart who, while Presbytery are laying their hands on his head, has dyspepsia laying its hands on his stomach.

Oh for a religious literature that shall take for its model of excellence a boy that loves God and can digest his dinner in two hours after he eats it! Be not afraid to say, in your account of his decease, that the day before you lost him he caught two rabbits in his trap down on the meadow, or soundly thrashed a street-ruffian who was trying to upset a little girl's basket of cold victuals. I do not think that heaven is so near to an illy-ventilated nursery as to a good gymnasium. If the Church of God could trade off three thousand hogsheads of religious cant for three thousand hogsheads of fresh air and stout health, we should be the gainers, but the fellow with whom we traded would be cheated mercilessly and forever.

An antidote for much literary poison is THE BEAUTIFUL STORY here presented. The young reader will not by it be fired with an ambition—such as is kindled by much juvenile literature—to run away and scalp Indians on the Rocky Mountains. Nearly all the boys that have run away from home, after being brought back, have confessed that they got their inspiration for the foolish deed from some of the books or periodicals for young people. But this “Beautiful Story” is just as thrilling and inspiring for the right as the other books I speak of are for the wrong. Much of it is dramatic in style—and that is the most impressive of all styles. The Bible is full of it. Here it is in the Book of Judges: The fir tree, the vine, the olive tree, the brambles—they all make speeches. Then at the close of the scene there is a coronation, and the bramble is proclaimed king. That is a political drama. Here it is in the Book of Job: Enter Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu, and Job. The opening act of the drama, all darkness; the closing act of the drama, all sunshine. Magnificent drama is the Book of Job! Here it is in Solomon's Song: The region, an Oriental region—vineyards, pomegranates, mountains of myrrh, flock of sheep, garden of spices, a wooing, a bride, a bridegroom, dialogue after dialogue, intense, gorgeous. All suggestive drama is the Book of Solomon's Song! Here it is in the Book of Luke: Costly mansion in the night, all the

windows bright with illumination, the floor aquake with the dance. Returned son in costly garments which do not very well fit him; perhaps they were not made for him, but he must swiftly leave off his old garb and prepare for this extemporized levee. Pouting son at the back door too mad to go in, because they are making such a fuss. Tears of sympathy running down the old man's cheek at the story of his son's wandering and suffering, and tears of joy at his return. Hear Murdoch recite the Prodigal Son in one of his readings, and you will not know whether to sob or shout. Revivals of religion have started just under the reading of that soul-revolutionizing drama of the Prodigal Son. Here it is in the Book of Revelation: Crystalline sea; pearline gate; opaline river; amethystine capstone; showering coronets; one vial poured out, incarnadining the waters; cavalrymen of heaven galloping on white horses; nations in doxology; hallelujahs to the right of them, hallelujahs to the left of them. As the Bible opens with the drama of the first Paradise, so it closes with the drama of the second Paradise.

I hail the publication of a book like this, because we need by an entertaining and sanctified literature to re-enforce our young people. What a battle they have to do right when there are so many influences combining to make them do wrong! It may be almost impossible to take a castle by straightforward siege, but suppose in the night there is a traitor within, and he goes down and draws the bolt and swings open the great door, and then the castle falls immediately. That is the trouble with the hearts of the young: they have foes without and foes within. There are a great many who try to make our young people believe it is a sign of weakness to be pure. The man will toss his head and take dramatic attitudes and tell of his own indiscretions, and ask the young man if he would not like to do the same; and they call him verdant, and say he is green and unsophisticated, and wonder how he can bear the puritanical strait-jacket. They tell him he ought to break from his mother's apron-strings, and they say, "I will show you all about town. Come with us. You ought to see the world. It won't hurt you. Do as you please, but it will be the making of you." After a while the young man says, "I don't want to be odd, nor can I afford to sacrifice these friends, and I'll go and see for myself." From the gates of hell there goes a shout of victory. Farewell to all innocence! Farewell to all earthly restraints favorable to that innocence, which, once gone, never comes back! I heard one of the best men I ever knew, seventy-five years of age, say, "Sir, God has forgiven me for all the sins of my lifetime; I know that, but there is one sin I committed at twenty years of age that I will never forgive myself for. It sometimes comes over me overwhelmingly, and it absolutely blots out my hope of heaven."

Young man, hear it! How many traps there are set for young people! That is what makes parents so anxious. Here are temptations for every form of dissipation, and every stage of it. The young man when he first goes into dissipation is very particular where he goes. It must be a fashionable hotel:

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he could not be tempted into one of those corner nuisances with red-stained glass and a mug of beer painted on a signboard. You ask the young man to go into such a place, and he would say, "Do you mean to insult me?" No, it must be a marble-floored bar-room. There must be no salacious pictures behind the counter; there must be no drunkard hiccuping while he takes his glass. It must be a place where elegant gentlemen come in and click their cut glass and drink to the announcements of flattering sentiment.

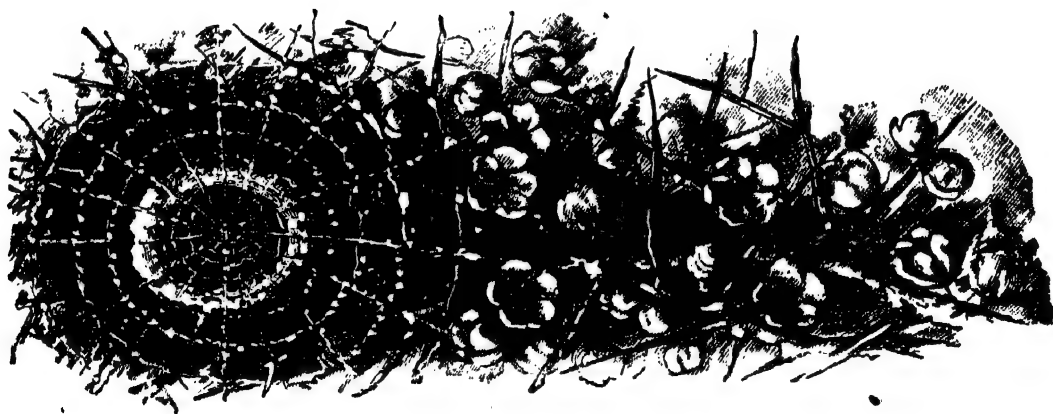
But the young man cannot always find that kind of a place, yet he has a thirst, and it must be gratified. The down grade is steeper now, and he is almost at the bottom. Here they sit in an oyster-cellar around a card-table, wheezing, bloated, and bloodshot, with cards so greasy you can hardly tell who has the best hand. But never mind; they are only playing for drinks. Shuffle away! shuffle away! The landlord stands in his shirt-sleeves, with his hands on his hips, watching the game and waiting for another call to fill up the glasses. It is the hot breath of eternal woe that flushes that young man's cheek. In the jets of gaslight I see the shooting out of the fiery tongue of the worm that never dies. The clock strikes twelve: it is the tolling of the bell of eternity at the burial of a soul. Two hours pass on, and they are all sound asleep in their chairs. Landlord says, "Come, now, wake up; it's time to shut up." They look and say, "What?" "It's time to shut up." Push them out into the air. They are going home. Let the wife crouch in the corner and the children hide under the bed. They are going home! What is the history of that young man? He began his dissipation in the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and completed his damnation in the worst grogshop in Navy street.

But sin even does not stop here. It comes to the door of the drawing-room. There are men of leprous hearts who go into the very best classes of society. They are so fascinating! They have such a bewitching way of offering their arm! Yet the poison of asps is under their tongue, and their heart is hell. At first their sinful devices are hidden, but after a while they begin to put forth their talons of death. Now they begin to show what they really are. Suddenly—although you could not have expected it, they are so fascinating in address, so charming in their manner—suddenly a cloud blacker than was ever woven of midnight or hurricane drops upon some domestic circle. There is agony in the parental bosom that none but the Lord God Almighty can measure—an agony that wishes that the children of the household had been swallowed by the grave, when it would be only a loss of body instead of loss of soul. What is the matter with that household? They have not had the front windows open in six months or a year. The mother's hair has suddenly turned white; the father, hollow-cheeked and bent over prematurely, goes down the street. There has been no death in that family, no loss of property. Has madness seized upon them? No, no! A villain, kid-gloved, patent-leathered, with gold chain and graceful manner, took that cup of domes-

tic bliss, elevated it high in the air until the sunlight struck it and all the rainbows danced about the brim, and then dashed it down in desolation and woe until all the harpies of darkness clapped their hands with glee and all the voices of ruin uttered a loud Ha! ha!

Oh, there are scores and hundreds of homes that have been blasted, and if the awful statistics could be fully set before you, your blood would freeze in a solid cake of ice at the heart! Do you wonder that fathers and mothers are anxious about their children, and that they ask themselves the question day and night, "What is to become of them? What will be their destiny?"

In this great struggle between good and bad this book is on the right side. May God speed it on a mission of light and rescue all round the world! and long after the author who wrote it, and the printers who set it up, and the publisher who starts it on its beneficent way shall have closed the work of their lifetime may *THE BEAUTIFUL STORY* continue a benediction to the human race!





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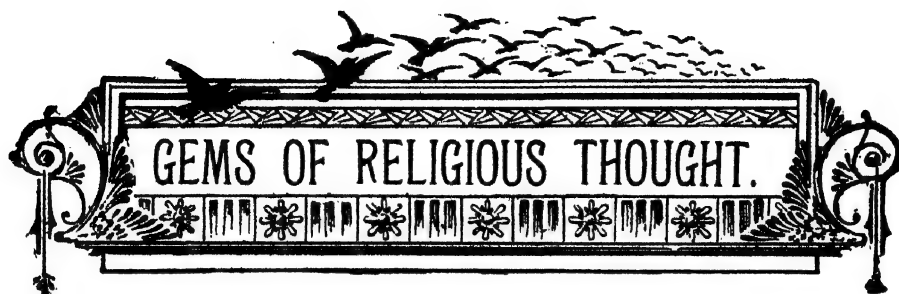
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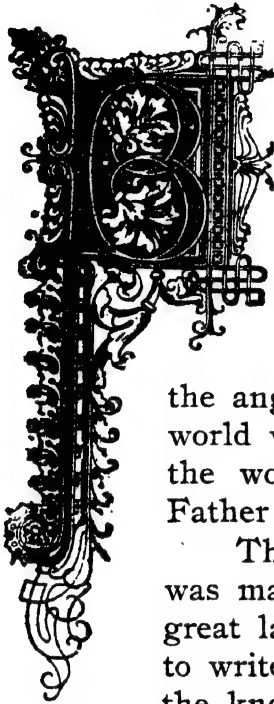
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THE BEAUTIFUL STORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE STORY OF CREATION.

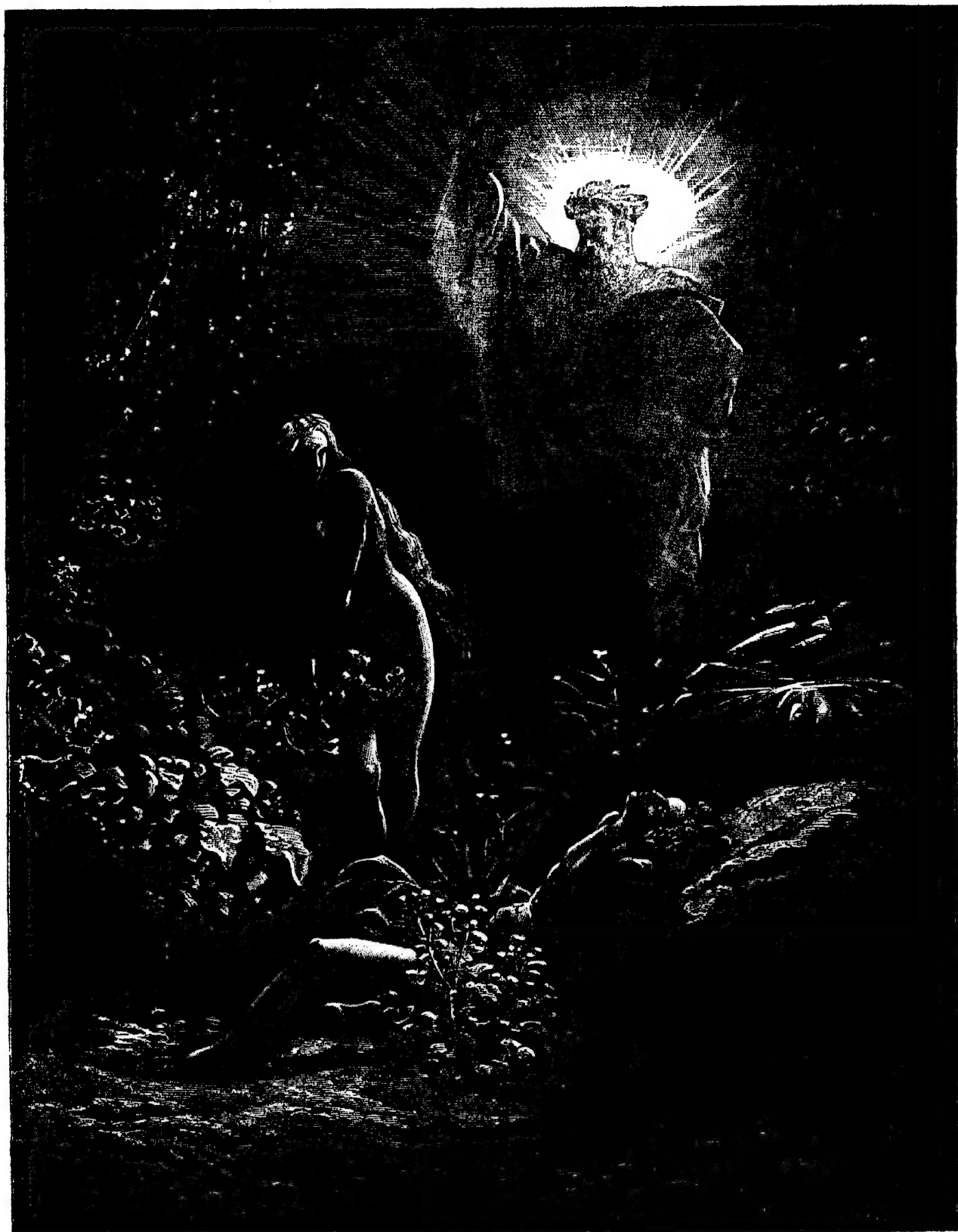
Genesis.



BEFORE our beautiful world was brought into existence by the command of God, there was neither sun, moon, stars nor living thing; yet there was a heavenly host, and the King of kings sat on His great white throne and received the praises of those radiant beings, the cherubim and seraphim (cherubs and seraphs) who, after the creation, became messengers between God and man, and guardians at the gates of Paradise. The Bible does not tell us much about the angels that were born in the celestial city, nor of God, before the world was fashioned by His mighty hand, but is chiefly a record of the works of the Almighty and His relation to mankind as the Father of all.

The first story in the Bible is that of creation—how the world was made. As there were no men on the earth until after God's great labor had been accomplished, no one would have been qualified to write a history of creation had not God inspired some man with the knowledge necessary thereto. And this is what He did. In the days of Moses there were none, not even the wisest, who knew how the world came into being, or how it had once been drowned for its wickedness. Desirous that His children should be enlightened upon the manner in which the world was spoken into existence, God endowed Moses with the gift of revelation, by which he was enabled to describe things he had never seen or heard of, for it was indeed God who directed his hand in the writing, so that Moses was but the instrument, or the pen, which God used to tell the story of creation. It was thus that the first five books (called the *Pentateuch*) of the Bible were written.

The beginning of God's labor was the creation of the earth, and of heaven, which was the air, or atmosphere, round about the earth, for heaven itself already existed. We still call the blue vault overhead, studded with the bright constellation of stars, the heavens, and it was this heaven, in contradistinction from that which is the abode of God, that is thus referred to by Moses. The



earth was without form and in darkness, until by the divine command the sun and moon and stars burst into being and cast their first light upon the new world. The light and darkness were now separated so that at appointed times the earth should be bathed with the sun's rays, and again be covered with darkness, and these changes God designed should occur every twelve hours. The former He therefore called day, and the latter night.

He divided the waters and made the dry land to appear, and in the latter planted the seed of every kind of tree, grass, and herb, which were made to spring up and yield their fruit to bless the earth, and the creatures which were speedily to be brought into being. The waters were now made to bring forth fish of every species, including the great whales and other monsters which belong to the deep, and winged fowls were made to fly above the waters and the earth. Then followed the creation of all manner of beasts and cattle, and things that creep as well, so that on the last day of God's labor the earth was teeming with life, both great and small, blessed by His generous hand, and ready for the dominion which He was about to give to a creature yet unborn to exercise over them.

Over all this beautiful world, so fresh and perfect, so wondrous with rich vegetation and marvellous with abundant and diversified life, God cast his gratified eye, and was pleased with His labor. But His great work was yet incomplete, for though all things which He had made were beautiful and perfect, He had given to none of His creatures the divine attribute—reason—which could make them mindful of His goodness and their dependency upon His bounty and mercy. To complete the measure of His omnipotence, God therefore said unto the celestial host by which He was surrounded, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." And so God fashioned Adam in His own image, and gave to him dominion over every living thing that was on the earth, and made every tree and herb to bring forth fruit for him.

It was on the seventh day that God completed His work of creation, and He rested on that day and blessed and sanctified it, being greatly pleased with what He had done.

But after resting one day God returned to His labor, not of creating, but of preparing the earth for the being He had fashioned in His own likeness.

The record of Moses tells us that "the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed." In this garden God made to grow every tree and flower that was beautiful to the sight, and that yielded the most delicious of fruits. In this garden Adam was placed and told to freely eat of everything that pleased him except of the fruit of a single tree that stood in the centre of this earthly paradise, and of this he was forbidden to touch. God told Adam that this tree bore fruit which was mortal to the taste, and that if he ate of it the penalty would be death.

After giving possession of the garden to Adam, God caused every species of bird, animal and reptile that He had created to pass before Adam, who gave

to each the name by which it should ever afterward be known. But though Adam had dominion over every living thing, and was set in the midst of all the beautiful things that prolific and exuberant nature could yield, he was nevertheless lonesome, and sighed for a companionship which nothing that God had yet made could supply. The birds of the air builded their nests and warbled sweetly their orisons together, while the beasts of the field lay down beside each other or sported over the green fields in happy freedom and joyful communication. Adam alone was without a mate to share the pleasures of Eden with him, a lonely creature amid the splendors of paradise.

God had compassion upon Adam, however, and resolved to give him a companion that should make happy the days, and fill his heart with renewed thanksgiving. Accordingly, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and while he slept a rib was taken from his side, which God fashioned into a woman, and when Adam awoke the most beautiful of all of God's creatures stood before him to be his companion for life, a joy unspeakable to his heart, a peace pure and perfect to his soul. This was the birth of love, the holiest feeling that God ever planted in human breast, the link that binds us in image, likeness, and aspirations to God the Father, the bond that neither time nor grave can sever.

Now was Adam happy, and the companion whom God had thus provided, whose name was called Eve, ministered to his joy as only a loving wife can. How were their hearts gladdened by the pride that burst from every flower scattering its incense, and every tree laughing with its golden fruit, and every herb yielding its succulent roots. But with all these wayside pleasures, limpid streams, musical winds, singing birds, delicious fruits, fragrant buds, and eyes that reflected love's image, hearts speaking loyal devotion, and words garlanded with honeyed phrases, there was that in the midst of these which should turn the heart from loving and the soul from thankfulness. Within this beautiful garden there was a serpent tempter, who was more cunning than any beast of the field, and he came to Eve, assuming the appearance of one wise, and said, "Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

Then Eve answered him by saying they were permitted to eat the fruit of every tree in the garden except of the one which stood in the centre, and this they were forbidden even to touch under penalty of death. The tempter, however, beguiled her with assurances that the fruit was not hurtful, but as grateful to the taste as to the sight, and, moreover, that the eating of it would make her as wise as God himself. These specious promises at length so excited the curiosity of Eve that she took the fruit and ate of it, and finding it pleasant to the taste, she persuaded Adam also to eat. When they had committed this great sin they heard the voice of God calling to them in the garden, and they hid themselves, being conscious of their guilt, and fear-stricken for the punishment that they had thus merited.

God asked Adam and Eve if they had eaten of the forbidden fruit, to which

they made reply that they had done so, being tempted and deceived by Satan. Whereat God was much angered, and told them that their disobedience should be punished in a most grievous manner: The serpent should thenceforth crawl



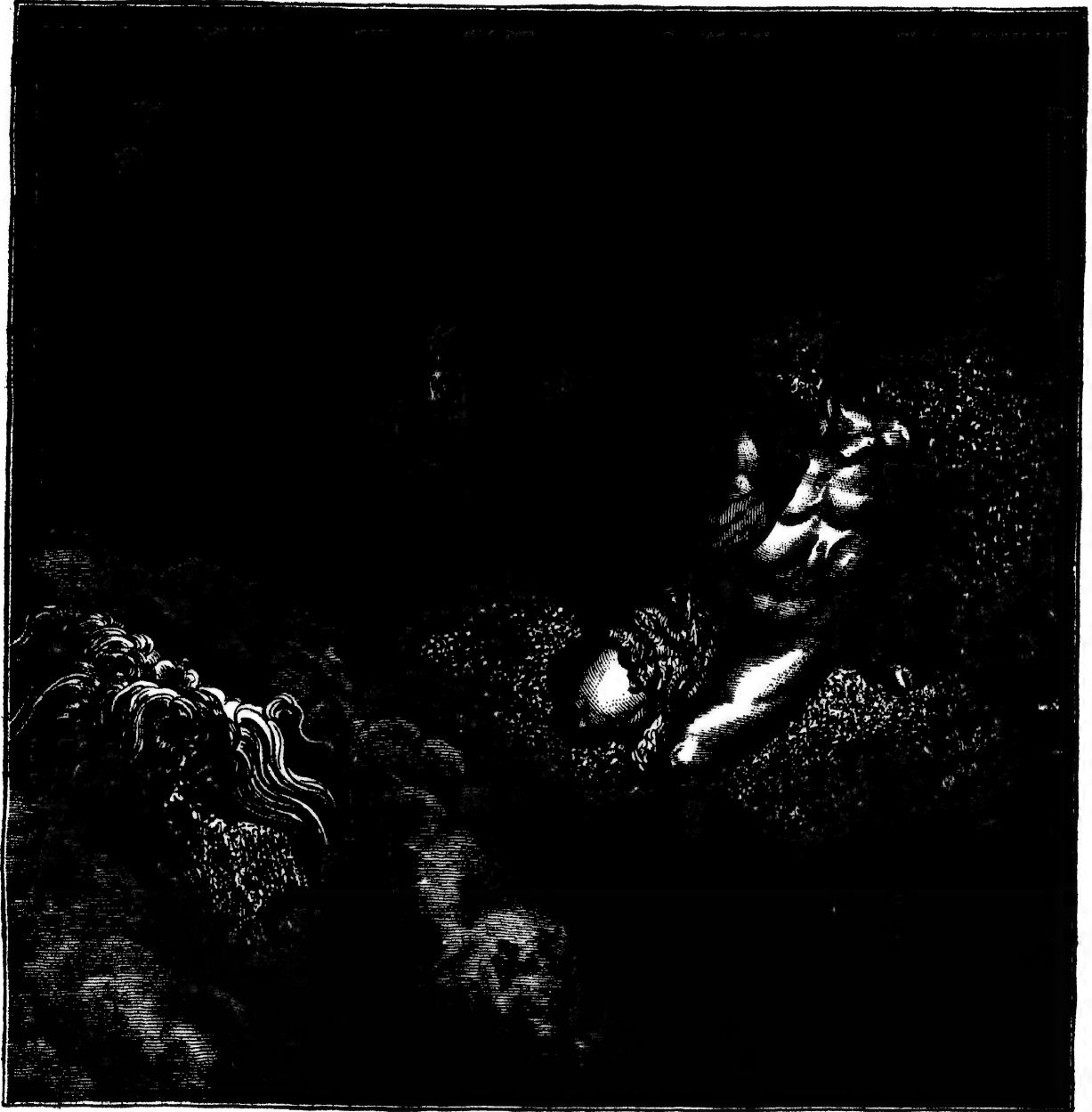
ADAM AND EVE EXPELLED FROM THE GARDEN.,

"Therefore the Lord sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."—GEN. iii. 23.

upon the ground with its mouth in the dust, and every man should seek its life; the woman, Eve, should be heir to great pain and sorrow; and the man, Adam, should thereafter be forced to labor in the fields and earn his bread by

"My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth."

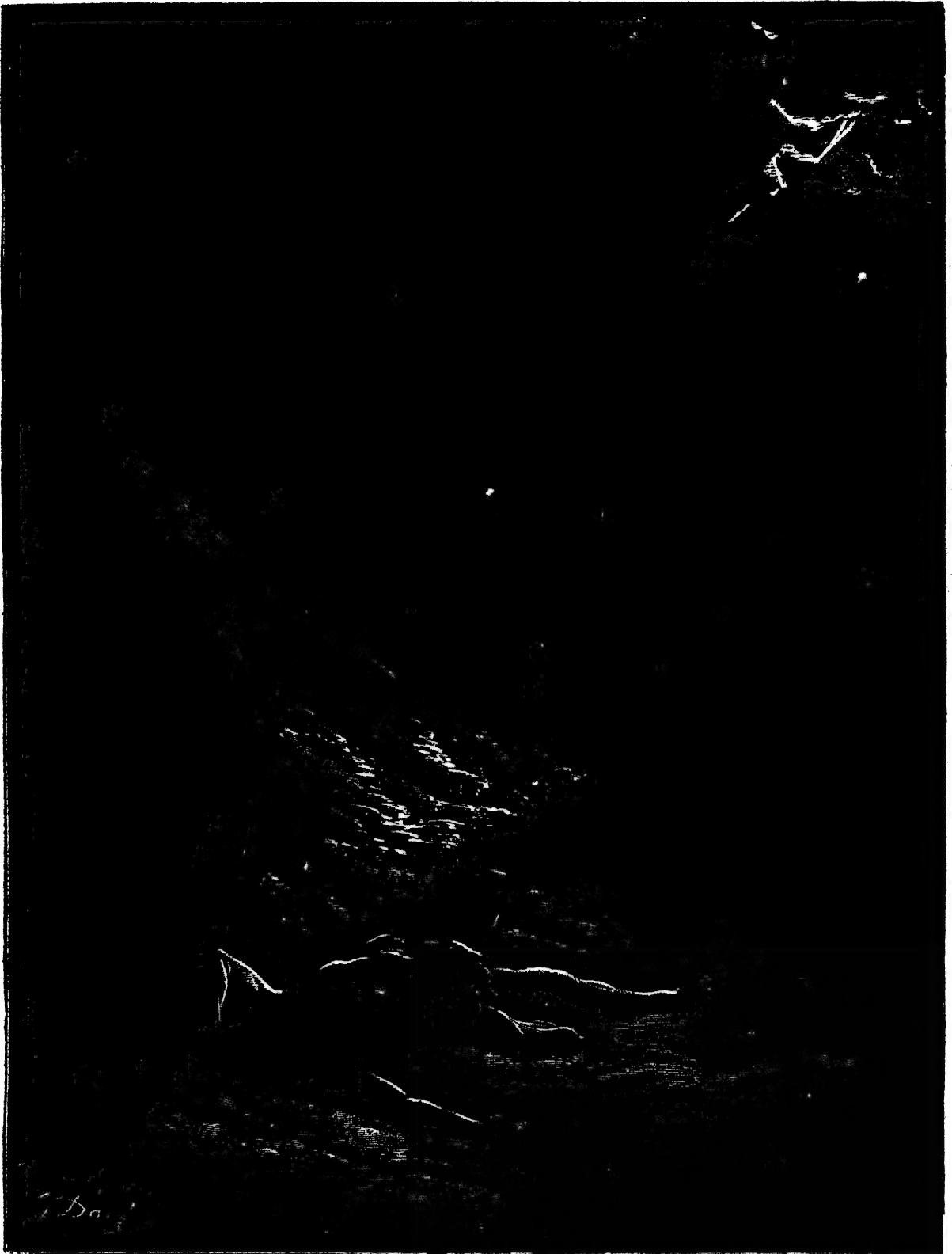
Cain, after being banished forever from the face of God, became an out-



CAIN AND ABEL, SACRIFICING.

"And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain, and his offering, he had not respect.—GEN. iv. 4, 5.

cast. He left the home of his father and mother, and for many years wandered over the land, until at length he settled in a country called Nod, where it is related he took a wife and founded a great city.



THE FIRST MURDER.

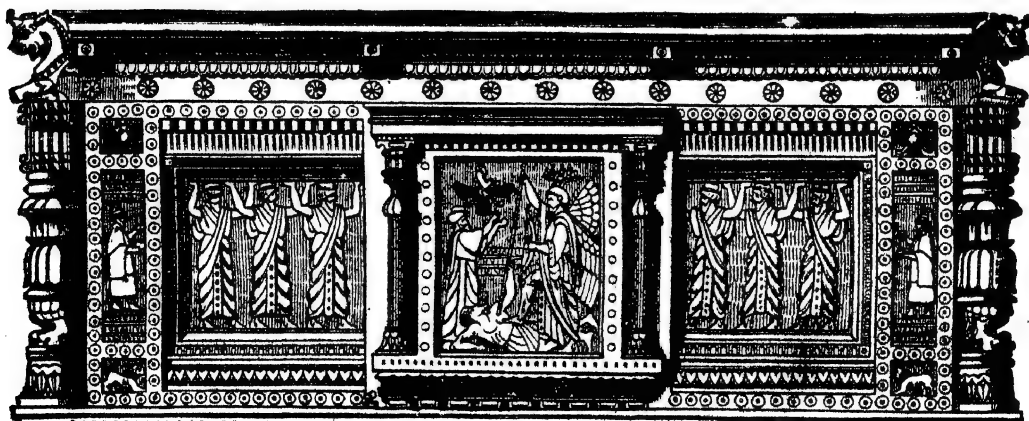
"Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him."—GEN. iv. 8.

Shortly after Cain left Adam and Eve, another son was born to them, whom they named Seth, and though the Bible does not tell us the names of the other children of our first parents, it is probable that many were born to them, both sons, and daughters, for Adam did not die until he was nine hundred and thirty years of age. Eve's age is not given. When Seth was one hundred and five years old he had a son whom he named Enos, at which time there were a great many people on the earth, descended from the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, a fact which we can more readily understand, knowing that in those days men and women lived to be many hundreds of years old, so that more than one hundred children might be born to each couple. The increase was therefore so extremely rapid that after Cain's many years of wanderings he found people spread over a large extent of country.

Some time after Cain had taken a wife in the land of Nod, a son was born to him whom he named Enoch. The piety and wisdom of this son was so great that Cain founded and named a city in his honor. There was also another Enoch, a descendant of Seth, and who was equally noted for wisdom, and was withal so righteous a man that he did not die, but was translated to heaven.

Cain had a great many children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, among whom were Jubal, the inventor of the first musical instrument, and Tubal-cain, who was the first metal founder, and made tools of iron and brass. Another was Jabal, who was a great herder, and became "the father of all such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle."

Enoch, although the most upright and godly man of his time, yet had many children who were unmindful of the goodness and mercy of God, and who refused to walk in the footsteps of their father. The Bible does not describe the wickedness of Enoch's children, but it tells us that in the earlier life of his grandson, Noah, the people were so sinful that God began to repent that He had made man, finding in him nothing but waywardness and ingratitude.





THE FLOOD.

(43)

"And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth."—GEN. vii. 19. •

CHAPTER III.

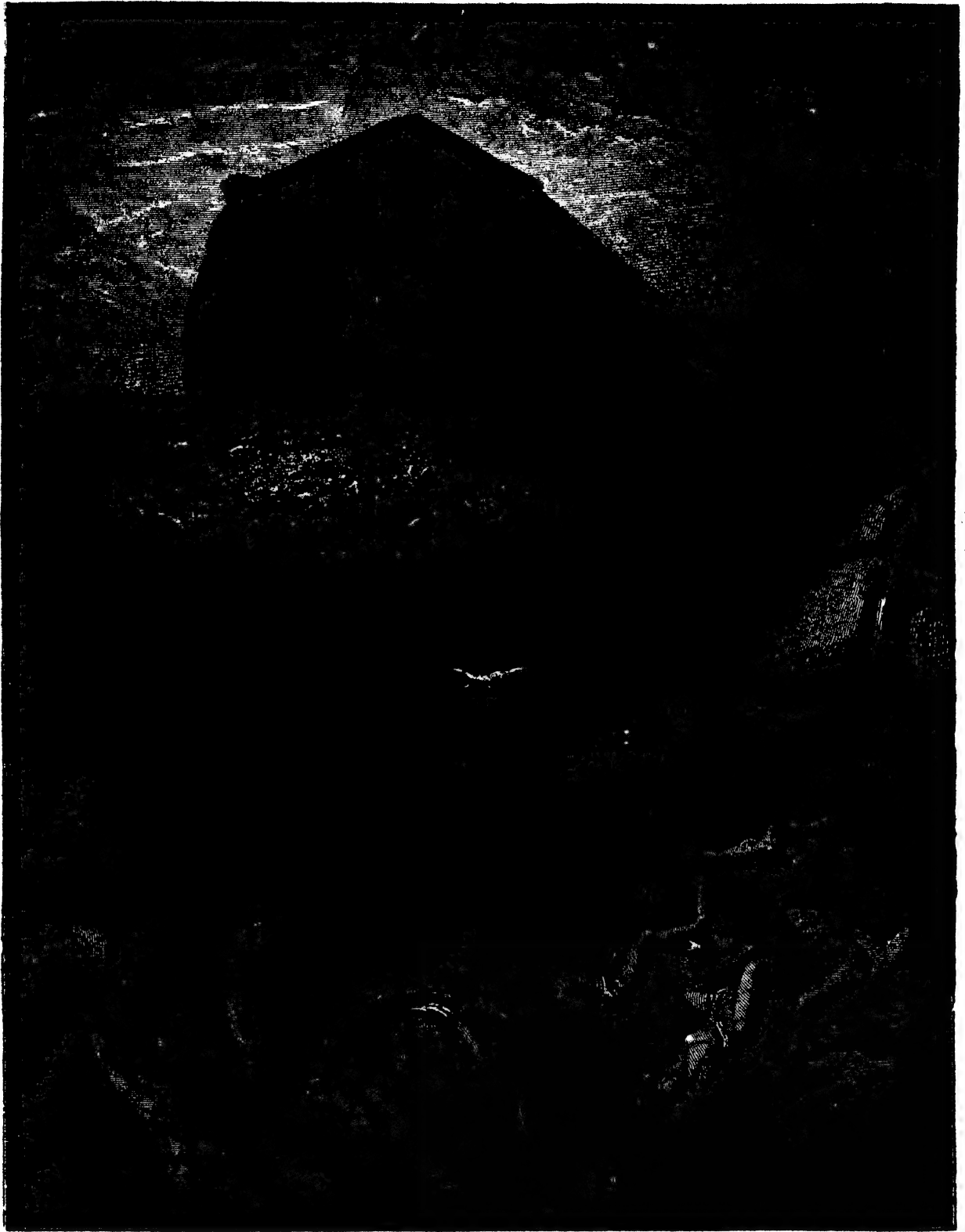
DESTRUCTION OF THE EARTH'S CREATURES.



SO great became the wickedness of men on the earth that God resolved to destroy the beautiful world which He had first fashioned for the abode of a being made in His own image and likeness. Now, among the many thousands of people who were upon the earth there was but one who found favor in God's eyes. This one exception was Noah, who had always walked uprightly and given praise for the manifold blessings God had bestowed on mankind. Noah had three sons, whose names were Shem, Ham, and Japheth, all of whom had also wives, and the family were devoted to the things which were just and righteous.

When God determined to destroy the world, He therefore excepted Noah and his family from the calamity, reserving them to re-people the earth after every other living thing, save two of every creature, should be destroyed. To save them, God therefore told Noah to build an ark, which was an immense boat, capable of containing not only his family, but two of every species of living thing found upon the earth, and seven of every clean beast, which should serve for food during the period that Noah should remain in the ark.

It required a long time to construct so large a vessel, and we may imagine how earnestly Noah sought to convert the people from their wickedness during the time of its building; but they were so corrupt that none gave heed to his warning. When, at length, the ark was completed, God commanded Noah to enter, together with his wife and sons, and their wives, and two of all creatures, both great and small, animals, birds, insects and every living thing. Seven days thereafter a great rain began to fall, which continued for a period of forty days and as many nights. The waters rose rapidly, and the wicked people and creatures that were doomed to destruction fled from their homes and caves and sought high places out of the reach of the waters. But little did this avail them, for the flood rose higher and higher, covering first the plains, then the hills, and at last the highest mountain tops, so that every thing perished not housed within the ark, and the world became still with death and desolation. Not a thing was visible save Noah's vessel, which alone rode the waves that rolled unfettered over the wide, wide waste, with nothing to break their force against.



AFTER THE DELUGE.

. (45)

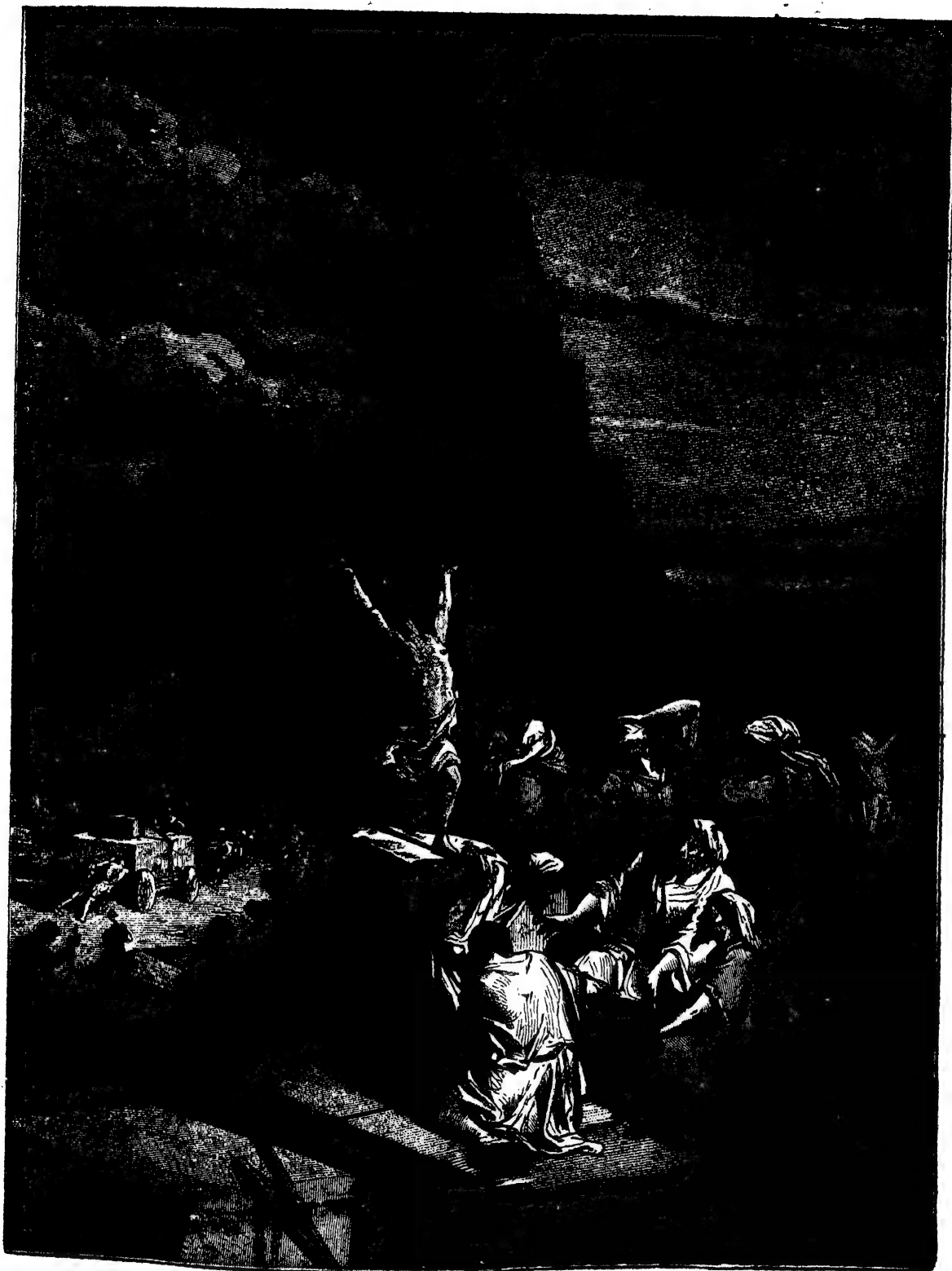
"Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from the face of the

—GEN. viii. 8.

The boundless waters prevailed over the earth one hundred and fifty days, when God made a wind to blow over the great sea, which evaporated the waters gradually, until after seven months the ark rested on a high mountain peak in Arabia, called Ararat. Three months later the tops of less lofty mountains became visible, and forty days after Noah sent forth a raven to see if it could find a congenial resting place. The raven continued to fly over the face of the waters, so Noah next sent forth a dove; but the bird found no place to set her foot and so returned to the ark. Seven days thereafter he sent out the dove again, and in the evening it returned to him with an olive leaf in its beak, which was a sign that the waters had abated. But Noah still remained in the ark another seven days, when he again sent forth the dove, which did not return any more. This was a sign to him that the waters were removed and that the earth was ready to receive him. He therefore "removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry." By command of God, Noah then came out of the ark, followed by his wife and sons and their wives, and every living thing that had been shut up therein with him. Upon reaching the valley, Noah built an altar, upon which he sacrificed of every clean beast and fowl, as an offering of his thankfulness, whereupon God was so pleased that He made a promise never to destroy the world again; and He blessed Noah and his family, and bade them replenish the earth. God then made a covenant with Noah, the token of which was the rainbow, which, whenever seen, was to be a reminder of His promise never again to drown the world, or the creatures thereon. Three hundred and fifty years after the deluge Noah died, and his age was nine hundred and fifty years.

When Noah and his family left the ark, they scattered and went into different countries and began to replenish the earth as God had commanded, so that when Noah died there were a great many people on the earth again. The largest settlement, we are led to suppose by the record, was somewhere near the central portion of Arabia, where the people were in such numbers that they began to forget God. At length there was a large emigration from Arabia eastward, and, as the people reached the plains of Shinar, along the Euphrates River, they found the country so fertile that they concluded to stop there and build a great tower. Their purpose in constructing such a building is not known, but, as they said, "Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven," it is inferred that they either expected to climb into heaven from its apex or to use it as a means of escape should God forget His covenant and send another deluge.

When they began to build the tower, every person spoke the same language, but as they progressed with the work God saw the evil of their intent, and so confused their tongues that the workmen could no longer understand each other, and they were thus compelled to relinquish their design, and the tower was left incomplete. On account of the babel and confusion of the laborers, the tower was called Babel, by which it was ever afterward known.



CONFUSION OF TONGUES AT THE BUILDING OF BABEL.

(47)

"And the Lord said . . . Let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."—GEN. xi. 6, 7.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH.



AMONG the descendants of Shem first mentioned in the Bible was Abram, who was the son of Terah. He had two brothers, Nahor and Haran, the latter of whom was the father of Lot, whose sad history we shall soon relate. Abram, who was a man of a holy spirit, had a wife whose name was Sarai, a godly woman that was devoted to the Lord and her husband. Terah had long dwelt in the town of Ur, which was on the Euphrates, about one hundred miles southeast of Babel, but, for reasons which the Bible does not explain, he left Ur, and journeyed to the land of Canaan, which had been settled by the descendants of Ham. He took with him his sons and their wives, and also Lot, his nephew, and after many weeks of travel he settled at Haran, in the northern part of Canaan, which

is now about the centre of Turkey in Asia. After the death of Terah, God told Abram to leave Haran, and separate from all his kinsmen except Lot, and to go unto another country which He would show him. The purpose of God, as he told Abram, was to found a new nation, over which he should rule to the glory of His name.

According to this commandment Abram left Haran, taking with him only his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot, and went southward to the land of Canaan, as they were directed. But while they journeyed, God appeared to Abram on the plain of Moreh, and told him that to him and his descendants He would give all the land of Canaan, which is now called Palestine, or the Holy Land. Abram was very grateful for the divine favor, and when he came to a mountain near Bethel, he built an altar unto the Lord and gave praise, though he knew not whither God was leading him.

As Abram continued travelling southward he found that there was a great famine in Canaan, so he did not tarry but went on toward Egypt. As they came near to the boundary of Egypt, Abram heard of the wickedness of the people of that country, and lest harm might come to him if the Egyptians should know that Sarai was his wife, Abram told her to say, to any who might ask, that she was his sister. As they advanced into the country, the people were attracted to Sarai by her great beauty, so she was taken from Abram and placed in

Pharaoh's (the king's) house, where she was made wife to the king. For this wickedness on the part of Pharaoh, God sent a plague upon him and his house, until it was made known that Sarai was not the sister, but wife of Abram. Pharaoh reproached Abram for deceiving him, but restored Sarai when, together, Abram, Sarai and Lot went out of Egypt and came again to the mountain near Bethel, where he had builded an altar, and there called upon the Lord as to what he should do.

Now Abram was a very rich man, having of cattle and sheep such a great number that it required the services of hundreds of herdsmen to care for them. But Lot's possessions were scarcely less considerable, so that the land was not fertile enough for the sustenance of so many animals; besides, the herdsmen who cared for the flocks of Abram were at strife with those employed by Lot, so that it was necessary that Lot and Abram should separate and occupy different lands. Abram therefore said to Lot, his nephew, "Let there be no strife between thee and me, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or, if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." This kind speech showed the righteous disposition of Abram, and his willingness to be controlled by justice as God taught him to see the right.

The two parted, as good friends should, no doubt deeply regretting the circumstances which compelled their separation. Abram remained in the land



SARAI IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF PHARAOH.

"And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house."—GEN. xii. 15.

of Canaan, where he had built an altar to the Lord, but Lot chose to move east to the rich plain of Jordan, which was likened unto a garden of the Lord and a country both beautiful and fertile.

When Lot had removed all his possessions to the plain of Jordan, God told

Abram to lift up his eyes and look about in every direction, for as far as he could see the land should be his forever.

After this Abram moved to the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and there built another altar which he dedicated to the Lord, and began the founding of a nation as God had promised.

When Lot moved to the plain of Jordan, he took up his residence in a city called Sodom, where he prospered, until four kings, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam,



SARAI AND HAGAR THE HANDMAID.

"Now Sarai, Abram's wife, . . . had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar."—GEN. xvi. 1.

Tidal, king of nations, Amraphel, king of Shinar, and Arioch, king of Ellasar, laid siege to Sodom and captured the city. Not content with the victory, for they fought for spoils, and not principles, they sacked the place, taking away everything of value, and carried off a great many Sodomites, whom they

intended should serve them as slaves. Among these unfortunate captives was Lot, whose unhappy fate was soon told to Abram by one of Lot's neighbors, who had escaped. Immediately upon learning this news Abram called together his trained servants, three hundred and eighteen in number, and arming them well he went in pursuit of the four kings, whom he came up with in the country of Dan and, dividing his forces so as to make a simultaneous attack in several quarters, he fell upon the despoilers in the night-time, and after slaughtering many put the rest to flight; but he followed after the fleeing army as far as Damascus, where, to effect their escape, the kings delivered over to Abram not only all their captives but the things which they had taken at Sodom, together with all their own possessions. So Abram brought back everything that had been taken away, and returned to the Sodomites all the things of which they had been despoiled.

As Abram was journeying back toward the city he was met by Melchizedek, the high-priest, and also by the king of Sodom, both of whom desired to manifest their thankfulness for the great service which Abram had rendered them. Melchizedek met him with bread and wine to feed the victorious soldiers, and gave Abram his blessing also. The king of Sodom was so thankful for the deliverance of his people that he said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." But Abram knew that it was God who had given him the victory, and refused to take anything from the people, but gave all that had been taken from the kings to those who had suffered at their hands, reserving only rewards for three young men who, though not his servants, went with him to battle. At this just and generous act God was still more pleased, and came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

Abram was not unmindful of the tender mercies which the Lord had shown him, but he was distressed on account of his childless condition, for though God had promised to give the land of Canaan to his descendants, Abram could not discover how this could be, since his wife was already old and no child had yet been born to them. Then God told Abram to look toward the sky and to try and count the stars, for as numerous as the stars were, yet they were not more than the number of descendants which he should have.

When evening came on Abram fell into a deep sleep, during which God again appeared to him and repeated his promise to make his descendants as numerous as the stars, but told him also that they should be strangers in another country, where they would be grievously wronged by being made to do hard service and be treated with great injustice. This, however, should not be until after Abram's death, for God assured him that he should live to a good old age and then die in peace, and also that he would, in the fourth generation, deliver Abram's descendants from their bondage and punish their masters for their iniquities.

Sarai was as much distressed at not having children as was Abram, so she

told her husband to take her handmaid, who was named Hagar, to wife, and to bring up children by her. Hagar was a comely woman who had entered the service of her mistress while Abram was sojourning in Egypt, and although she was an Egyptian, she could not have been so wicked as were her countrymen, or Abram would hardly have permitted her to go back to Canaan with him.

Some time after Abram had taken Hagar to be his wife, polygamy being common in those days, she bore him a son who was named Ishmael. After this event God again appeared to Abram and renewed His covenant, or promise, with him, at which he changed the name of Abram to that of Abraham, and of Sarai to that of Sarah, and told him that though Sarah was now ninety years old she would, nevertheless, bear him a son, who should be called Isaac. God further told Abraham that though Ishmael would find much favor in His sight and become the father of twelve princes and the founder of a great nation, yet He would establish His covenant with Isaac, who was to become yet greater.

HAGAR IS DRIVEN FROM ABRAHAM'S HOUSE.

Everything happened as God had foretold, but after Isaac was born Sarah became very jealous of Hagar and Ishmael, whom she did not wish to share the inheritance, promised by God, with her son, so she commanded Abraham to cast out Hagar and Ishmael, since she was a bondwoman. Abraham was sorely distressed because of Sarah's complaint, but, as God told him to obey his wife, he did accordingly; therefore, early in the morning, he took a bottle of water and some provisions, which he gave to Hagar, and sent her out of his house. We can imagine the sorrow that was in Abraham's heart when he saw Hagar departing with his own son, an outcast, with nowhere to lay her head, and with nothing but kind Providence to direct her steps and provide her with food. Had not God assured him that He would care for Hagar, and would preserve Ishmael and make him a great ruler, Abraham would hardly have consented to do so hard a thing as Sarah had commanded, but in all things Abraham was both trustful and obedient, as the frequent trials of his great faith prove.

When Hagar went away she became a wanderer in the wilderness of Beersheba, her heart overflowing with sorrow, and her feet following after no path. Thus did she aimlessly wander about, until soon the water in the bottle that Abraham had given her had all been drunk and Ishmael began to cry for drink. The thirst of the poor child at last became so great that Hagar laid him down on the earth and went in search of water, but wherever she turned the ground was parched and moisture was not anywhere about. This poor mother's love was put fully to the test, for seeing her child dying with thirst which she could not allay, she drew away from Ishmael the distance of a bow-shot and sat down and cried bitterly, saying, "Let me not see the death of the child."



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HAGAR AND ISHMAEL IN THE DESERT.

"And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice and wept."—GEN. xxi. 16.

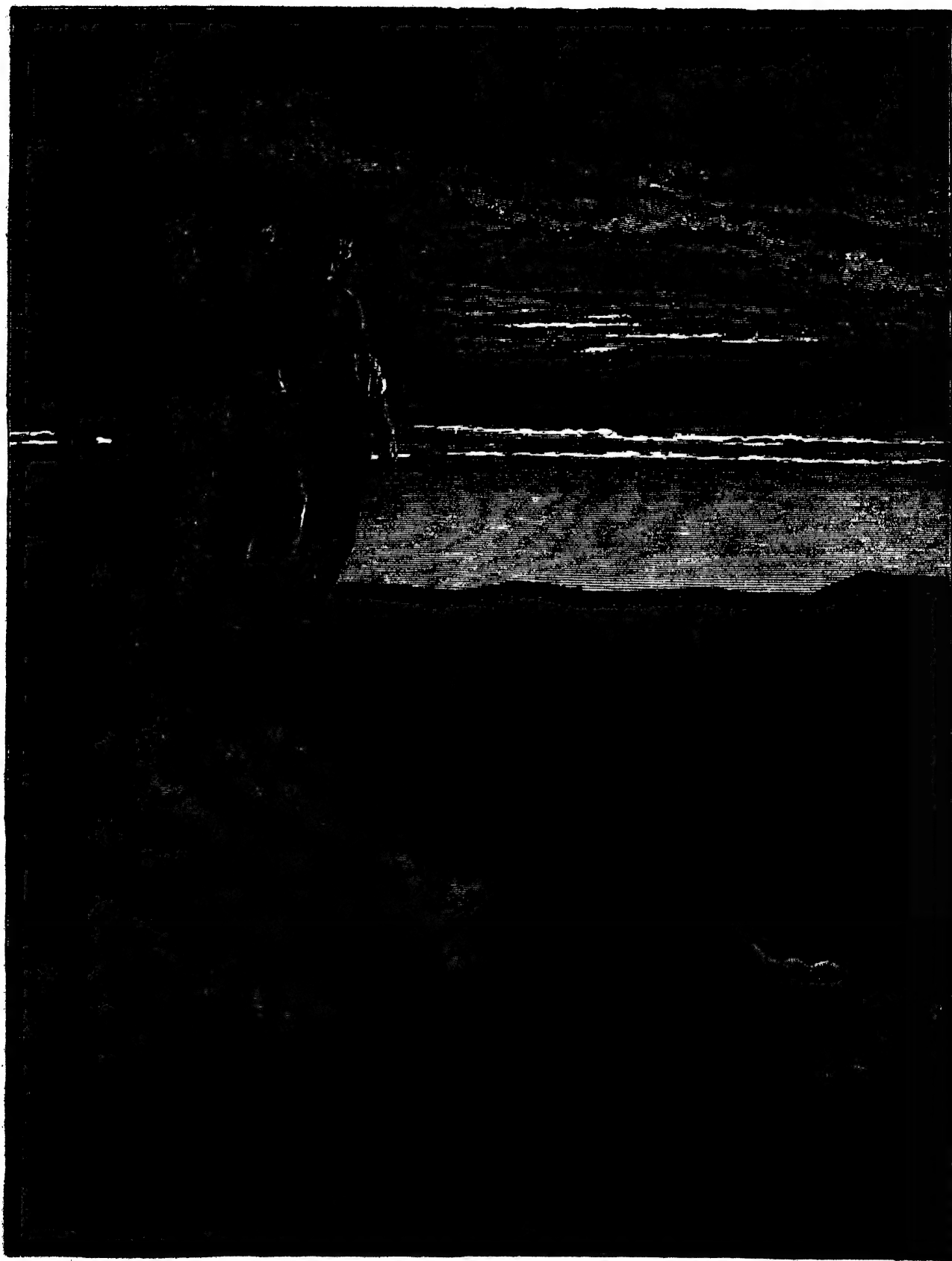
As she was weeping with the deep grief that was so sorely afflicting her, Hagar heard a voice saying, "Hagar, what aileth thee?" Looking up she saw an angel, who told her to rise up and not be afraid, for God had heard the lad, and would save him and make him yet the ruler of a great nation. The angel then directed her to a well of water that began to flow near her, so that she filled her bottle again and gave the lad drink. After this God took care of Hagar and Ishmael, who went into the wilderness of Paran, where Ishmael grew up to be a great archer, and his mother procured for him a wife out of Egypt, whither Hagar and Ishmael went to live, and where it afterward came to pass as God had promised, so that Hagar was rewarded in the end by seeing her son become a ruler scarcely inferior to Isaac.

DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

Shortly before the birth of Isaac, and the sending of Hagar away, as just described, Abraham received another manifestation of God's special love for him. While sitting in the door of his tent, toward the midday hour, he saw three men approaching, whom, upon coming near, he invited to rest themselves beneath the shade of a tree which stood before his tent, and ordered some water to be brought that they might wash their feet, for they appeared to be weary from travelling. While the three were washing, Abraham ordered a calf to be killed and some cakes to be cooked, and when the meal was ready he served them to meat beneath the tree under which they had been invited to sit.

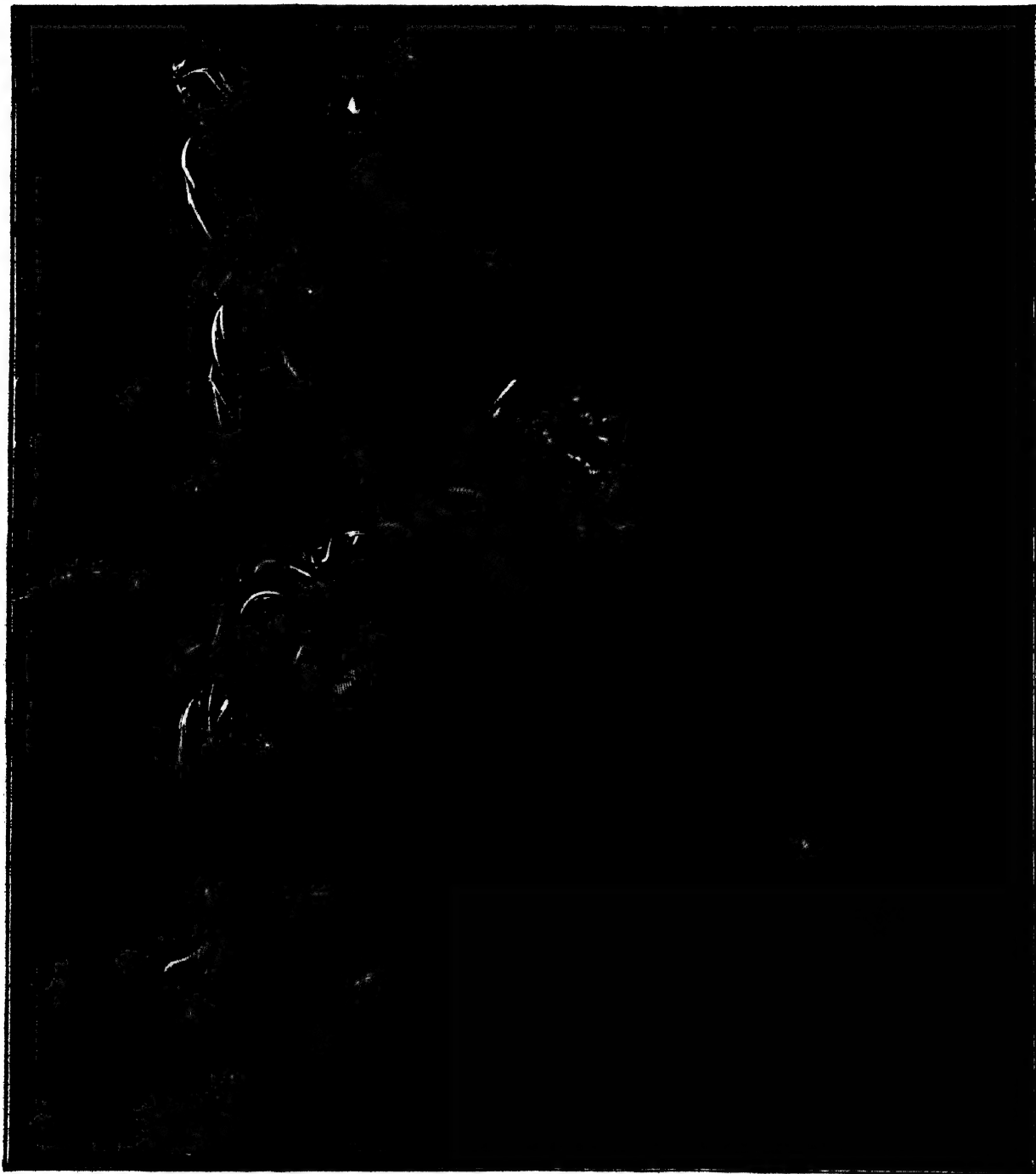
After the three had eaten they arose and departed toward the city of Sodom, Abraham following after, for he now perceived that they were not men, but angels whom God had sent to bear His message to Abraham. When they had gone a little way the angels, speaking for the Lord, told Abraham that the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah had become so great that God had determined to destroy them. Now Lot, Abraham's nephew, whom he dearly loved, dwelt in Sodom, and Abraham was therefore much distressed, both for the people and lest Lot might not escape God's vengeance. He therefore called upon the Lord and asked if He would destroy the righteous with the wicked; that if there were fifty righteous in the city, would He not spare the place. After prevailing with the Lord in begging Him to spare the city for the few righteous that might be found therein, God finally told him that if as many as ten righteous persons could be found in the city He would spare it. Abraham believed that many more than ten resided within the gates of Sodom, for whose sake the Lord would withhold His anger, so he returned to his tent.

In the evening of the same day, as Lot sat at one of the gates of Sodom, he saw two men coming toward him, and as they drew near he invited them to go into his house and tarry with him all night. To his kindly invitation they answered nay, saying they would remain in the streets; but he pressed



ABRAHAM AND THE THREE ANGELS.

his invitation upon them so urgently that they at length consented, and when they had entered Lot caused a feast to be made wherewith to entertain the strangers.



AND HIS FAMILY FLEEING FROM SODOM.

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."—GEN. xix. 26.

After the supper was over the men asked Lot how many there were of his family, to which reply being made, they told him to get his people together

and also all his possessions, and to bring them at once out of the place, for God had sent them as His messengers to destroy both Sodom and Gomorrah. When morning appeared the two men, whom Lot now knew to be angels, told him to make haste and take his family out of the city, lest he be consumed with all the others. Lot still lingered, scarcely believing what had been prophesied, until the two angels took him by the hand, and also seized upon the hands of his wife and two daughters and brought them without the place, and bade them run for their lives. So Lot ran with his family toward the nearest town, and as they departed rapidly the Lord rained upon Sodom

and Gomorrah fire and brimstone, which made a great smoke and flame, so that the burning might be seen from a great distance. In their hasty flight Lot's wife was tempted by the great noise she heard and the singular thing which had now come to fulfil what the celestial messengers had foretold, and looked back toward the burning city, when in-



ABRAHAM'S VISION OF THE PROMISED

"And the Lord said unto Abraham, . . . All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."—GEN. xiii. 14, 15.

stantly she was changed into a pillar of salt. Lot and his daughters, however, continued on until they came to the town of Zoar, not far distant from Sodom, where they dwelt for a time until they were received by Abraham.

ABRAHAM'S GREAT FAITH SORELY TRIED.

The sending of Hagar away so greatly grieved Abraham that the Lord was not wholly pleased, seeing that His servant did not accept all the things commanded of him to be done with that resignation which is commendable in

those who seek to do God's will, so the Lord determined to make a trial of the strength of Abraham's faith, which should show how truly he was devoted to His service. Accordingly God called him and said: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee to the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Abraham fully understood the terrible meaning of this command, and though to kill his only son would have fairly wrung his loving heart with

agony, he knew that even in the most terrible moments of his wrath God is merciful and moves in mysterious ways, and he hastened to do that which was bidden.

The Bible tells us that early in the morning he arose, and saddling up an ass he took two young men to gather wood for the burnt offering, and with Isaac he repaired to the spot on the side of a mountain to make the offering as commanded. When the wood had been gathered he laid it upon Isaac, who carried it to the place chosen. As they went along together Isaac asked his father where was the lamb for the offering, but Abraham only replied, "My son, God himself will provide a lamb."

When they reached the place to which God had directed them, Abraham built



"ABRAHAM, LAY NOT THY HAND UPON THE LAD."

"And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him."—GEN. xxii. 12.

an altar and laid the wood, after which he bound Isaac and put him upon the pile; then drawing the large knife that was in his girdle, he was upon the point of plunging it into his innocent and beloved son when God arrested his arm and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" And Abraham answered, "Here am I." And the Lord spoke: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from

As Abraham looked up he saw a ram which was fast in a thicket by his horns, and he took the ram, and killing it, offered it upon the altar instead of his son, which was acceptable to God, who was so well pleased with the faith of Abraham that He blessed him again, and renewed the promises before made to him. Abraham was so overjoyed at this happy deliverance of his son that he called the place of offering Jehovah-jireh (*the Lord will provide*).

DEATH OF SARAH AND MARRIAGE OF ISAAC.

When Abraham returned from making his offering he prepared to remove from Beersheba to a country northeast, but in the land of Canaan. His herds of cattle were now very great and his possessions of gold and silver were larger than those of any other man thereabout, so that it required a great number of servants, camels and asses to transport his goods. In those days people commonly dwelt in tents, especially those who followed pastoral pursuits, and when their herds were large, like those of Abraham, removals from place to place were frequent in search of new pasturage, and it was this fact, no doubt, which made Abraham change his place of living so often.

It was long after Abraham's removal to Hebron that Sarah, his beloved wife, fell sick and died, at which time she was one hundred and twenty-seven years of age. The loss of this good woman, who had walked with her husband so many years in the path of righteousness, was deplored greatly, not only by Abraham, but by the people about Hebron as well, for we read that when Abraham asked for a sepulchre in which to bury Sarah the people answered that he might bury her in any of their sepulchres that he chose. It was not the custom at that time to bury the dead in the ground, as we do now, the practice being to deposit the body in an excavation, usually of rock, the door to which was a large stone, and such excavation served as a sepulchre for an entire family. This proffer to Abraham was therefore one which showed how highly esteemed were both himself and wife by the people among whom he had recently settled.

Instead of accepting the very kind offer made him, Abraham chose a cave which was in the end of a field owned by a man named Ephron. So he made an offer to buy the cave; but Ephron thought no less of Abraham and Sarah than did his neighbors, and he accordingly offered to give both the cave and field to Abraham. This generosity affected Abraham greatly, for he perceived that all the people were deeply attached to him, but he refused to accept the place as a gift, and Ephron was finally induced to receive four hundred shekels (\$250) for the cave, and in this he deposited the body of Sarah, intending that this now sacred place should, in due time, become the depository of his own.

Up to the time of purchasing the Cave of Machpelah (meaning *double cave*), as the burial place of Sarah was called, although God had promised to give him the whole of Canaan as an inheritance, Abraham had not owned even the

smallest parcel of ground at any place where he had pitched his tent. It was, no doubt, this reason which prompted Abraham to buy, rather than to receive as a gift, the cave which Ephron owned, though the desire to own a sepulchre, which should be the exclusive depository of the bodies of himself and near kinsmen, possibly actuated him quite as much. This cave did afterward become the sepulchre of not only his own and wife's remains, but also of the bodies of Isaac and Rebekah, his wife, Jacob and Leah, his wife, and of Joseph. The sepulchre still exists under the Hebron mosque, and is pointed out to all visitors to that region, and is the shrine to which many pious pilgrimages are made.

THE STORY OF ISAAC AND REBEKAH.

It would appear, from reading the sacred records, that after the burial of Sarah, Abraham returned to Beersheba, and sought the marriage of his son Isaac. Although everywhere in Canaan Abraham was treated with the greatest kindness, yet he bitterly opposed Isaac marrying any of the women of that country, and would be reconciled to no other than a woman who should be of his own kindred. He therefore called his head servant and told him to take ten camels and to load them with fine presents and go to the city of Haran, which was in Mesopotamia (where Abraham formerly lived), in quest of a suitable woman to become his son's wife.

The servant did all things as Abraham had commanded him, and departed with the ten loaded camels. After many days of travelling he came to the outskirts of Haran in the evening, and desiring to rest himself before going into the city, he caused the camels to kneel down by a well which he found and to which he knew many women of the place came to draw water. The servant then offered a prayer to God, asking that he be directed in fulfilling the wishes of his master, and said, "Behold, I stand here by the well of water; . . . and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that Thou hast showed kindness unto my master."

Directly after the servant had ceased praying a beautiful woman came to the well to fill her pitcher, whom the servant accosted and asked that she would let down the pitcher and allow him to drink therefrom. The woman replied most graciously and offered water to the servant and to his camels also, whereupon the servant saw that she was the one selected by the Lord to be a wife to Isaac. When the camels had done drinking the servant took some presents from the bags which he had brought, and, offering them to the woman, asked her name and if there was room in her father's house to give lodging to himself and those who came with him. She answered that she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, and that her mother's name was Milcah, whose house was large enough to lodge him, and having stables to accommodate his



REBEKAH AT THE WELL.

"And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold."—GEN. xxiv. 22.

camels. So she invited him to come to her father's house, and ran before him to apprise her mother that strangers were coming to lodge with them. As she went toward the house she met her brother, Laban, who, seeing the presents which his sister, whose name was Rebekah, had received, went to the servant at the well and said to him, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord: wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels."

When the servant came within the house he was offered meat for himself and provender for his camels, but before he would sit himself to eat, he told them he must first tell the purpose of his errand. So he told them all that Abraham had commanded him to do, whereupon Laban and Bethuel said that he must have been directed by God, so they told the servant to take Rebekah

and go back to Abraham that she might become the wife of Isaac. When the servant had thus found all accomplished as his master had wished, he drew forth the presents that he had brought and gave to Rebekah a large number of gold and silver ornaments, besides many pieces of costly raiment, nor did he withhold presents from Laban and Bethuel, for to each he gave many precious articles.



THE OAK OF ABRAHAM.

When they had feasted the servant desired to return at once to Abraham with Rebekah; Laban and his mother, however, begged him to remain with them for so much as ten days, but the servant told them not to hinder him from going forthwith. So they asked Rebekah if she was ready to depart with the servant, and she answered, "I will go."

The departure from Haran was made on the day following the servant's arrival, so that the camels had little rest, but they travelled slowly, returning by a different route from that taken on the first journey.

Isaac was not living with his father when this event transpired, for the Bible tells us that he was sojourning at Lahai-roi, which was in the extreme southern part of Palestine. But as the caravan was returning to Beersheba Isaac was also going to the same place, though he did not know that a wife was being chosen for him who was at that time drawing near to his father's

house to celebrate her marriage with him. As the caravan approached toward Lahai-roi Rebekah saw Isaac walking through a field, and said, "What man is that who comes to meet us?" The servant, seeing that it was Isaac, replied that it was his master, whereupon she covered her face with a veil. When Isaac came near the servant met him and told him all that had transpired, and that he had brought Rebekah to be his wife. Isaac was forty years of age at this time, but he had been without comfort since the day of his mother's death, grieving continually for her. When he wedded Rebekah, however, joy returned to him, for the moment that he beheld her face he loved her greatly.

After the marriage of Isaac, Abraham, who was now very old, gave him all that he had, and made him rich in worldly possessions. It is probable that this gift was made by will, rather than given to Isaac to hold at once before his father's death, for Abraham married again, taking a woman whose name was Keturah, and by her had children, by whom he became the father of the Keturah Arabs, but these children were not permitted to share in the inheritance with Isaac, being cut off as was Ishmael.

We are told that Abraham died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five years, but it is not related where he was residing at the time of his death, though the inference is that he was still at Beersheba. Isaac and Ishmael met at his funeral, and together paid the last sad duty of preparing their father's remains for burial. Regarding the wishes which Abraham expressed at the time of laying away his beloved wife Sarah, they deposited his body beside her in the cave of Machpelah, which is even at this day pointed out to travellers in the Holy Land as a place second in sacredness to that of Golgotha.

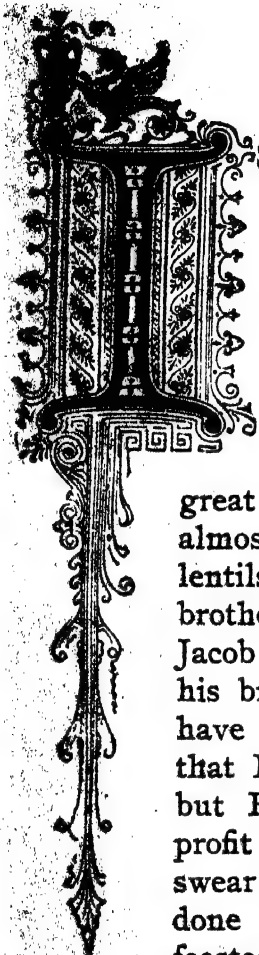
Few references are made by the Bible to Ishmael after his last meeting with Isaac at the funeral of Abraham, no more than to indicate that he had no settled habitation, and followed warlike pursuits, like the Keturah Arabs, who are true to this inherited instinct even to this day. He survived his father just fifty years, and died at the age of one hundred and thirty-seven years. The place of his death or burial is not recorded.

Of all the holy characters described in the Bible, none are more divine-like than Abraham; indeed, he was the only one of the patriarchs and prophets who never departed from God's commands, or lifted his spirit, even in thought or deed, in rebellion against the commands or wishes of his Lord. The offer of a sacrifice of his only lawfully begotten and beloved son, in loving obedience to that call which he so promptly recognized, is the most exalted example of trustful faith ever exhibited by man, which can only be rewarded by that richest of all blessings, which God gives to those who serve Him best and whom He most loves.

Blessed be the name of Abraham!

CHAPTER V.

THE STORY OF JACOB AND ESAU.



ISAAC continued to dwell at Lahai-roi after his father's death, but it was not until many years after his marriage that God blessed him and gave him two children, which were named Jacob and Esau. As the boys grew up Esau became a hunter, like Ishmael, and Jacob was a dweller in tents, by which, we presume, he followed pastoral pursuits like his grandfather Abraham did. It happened that the two young men were not equally liked by their parents, for Rebekah loved Jacob, while Esau was Isaac's favorite, and this favoritism at length led to great trouble. One day Esau returned from the hunt very tired and almost dead with hunger, and seeing Jacob preparing a pottage of lentils, which was a plant somewhat like the pea, he said to his brother, "Feed me, I pray thee, with that red pottage, for I am faint." Jacob perceiving how great was Esau's hunger, took advantage of his brother's necessity, for, instead of offering him food, as he should have done, he offered to give him the pottage only upon condition that Esau should give him his birthright. This was a hard bargain, but Esau replied, "Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright be to me?" Then Jacob made his brother swear to renounce his birthright and give it to him, which being done Esau was permitted to eat of the bread and pottage, and having feasted under these hard conditions he then went away.

Soon after this event there was a famine in the land and Isaac thought to escape it; he would go down to Egypt, but God told him to remain and He would fulfil the covenant He had made with Abraham. So Isaac remained and sowed seed on his land, which yielded to him a hundred fold. So prosperous was he that he soon became the richest man in all the country thereabout, which greatly vexed the Philistines, among whom he dwelt, and in their exceeding envy they filled up all the wells that had been dug by his father, and that were upon his land. As Isaac had great herds of cattle and camels, and as wells were the only source of water supply in that country, this act of his envious neighbors did him such harm that he complained to the king, whose name was Abimelech. But the king, instead of punishing his persecutors, justified their wrong-doing by telling Isaac to leave the country. Thus was Isaac compelled to move to another place, and he settled in a valley called



JACOB'S DREAM.

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven." *Genesis xxviii. 12.*

Gerar, not far distant. Here he set to work and re-opened another well which had been in use during his father's time but had been filled up by the Philistines. When this well, or spring rather, began to flow, the people of the valley claimed the water was their own, so that he was again forced to move. For a second time he opened another well, but they drove him from this one also. His third attempt, however, had a happier ending, for when he opened a well at Rehoboth the people no longer vexed him, seeing that his success must be due to the special favor of God.

Abimelech was especially moved by Isaac's wonderful prosperity, and seeing now how desirable a thing was his friendship. the king, with one of his friends, and captain in his army, went to call upon Isaac. When they came into his presence Isaac said to the king, "Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me and have sent me away from you?" To which Abimelech replied, "We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee; and we said, Let there now be an oath betwixt us, and let us make a covenant with

thee." Though Isaac had been greatly wronged by the king and his people, he was, nevertheless, forgiving, and thereupon entered into a covenant of friendship with the king, who feasted and drank at Isaac's table.

After Esau had bartered his birthright to Jacob he went away, but beyond this the Bible tells us nothing further about him until he was forty years of age, when he was married to Judith, the daughter of Beeri, a Hittite, and also to Bashemath, who was likewise a Hittite. This marriage greatly distressed Isaac, for he did not believe

REBEKAH COMING TO THE WELL.

in polygamy, and thought that his son in marrying two women had committed an abominable sin.

But the marriage of Esau was only the beginning of Isaac's trouble, for soon after he became stricken with blindness. Notwithstanding the grief which had caused him, Isaac seemed to have lost none of his love for him. One day Isaac called to Esau and told him to take his bow and go into the field and kill for him a deer (venison) and prepare a savory dish for him to eat, promising him his blessing. Rebekah heard Isaac promise a blessing to

Esau, and resolved to take advantage of her poor blind husband by so deceiving him that her favorite son Jacob should receive the blessing instead of Esau. To accomplish her very unnatural design Rebekah went to Jacob and told him what his father had said, and commanded him to bring two young kids with which to prepare savory meats to take to his father. Jacob did as she had ordered, but not without misgiving, for he said to his mother: "Behold, Esau, my brother, is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man; my father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon me and not a blessing." But Rebekah replied that the curse would be upon her, and insisted.

After Rebekah had cooked the kids as she thought Isaac would best like them, she clothed Jacob with some of Esau's coats and covered his hands and neck with the skins of the kids, so that to Isaac's touch he might appear hairy like Esau. Taking the meat as his mother had ordered, he carried it to his father and said, "I am Esau thy first-born; I have done according as thou badest me; arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me." Then Isaac called Jacob to him that he might feel him, for he mistrusted his voice. But when he had felt him he said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau," so he blessed him. When he had eaten, Isaac again called Jacob to him, being still suspicious that he was being deceived, and smelled his raiment. This satisfied him, and he poured out the blessing upon Jacob which he had intended to give to Esau.

Scarcely had his father ceased blessing Jacob when Esau returned from hunting, and preparing a dish of meat carried it to Isaac, and begged him to eat the offering of his first-born. When he had spoken with Esau, Isaac knew how he had been deceived, and wept with grief that having given his blessing and the best things to Jacob, he could not bestow upon Esau what was in his heart to grant. Esau complained loudly, and justly, against Jacob, who had now supplanted him twice by employing the most wicked artifices.

Isaac tried to comfort his wronged son by telling him that though Jacob should now become his master, he should yet prosper greatly, and while serving his brother in battle would break the yoke, or mastership, which Jacob held over him.

But this promise, though somewhat consoling, did not abate Esau's anger toward his brother, for he declared that after his father's death he would avenge the wrong done him by killing Jacob. This threat so greatly alarmed Rebekah that she told Jacob to go away to her brother Laban and remain with him awhile until Esau's anger should abate. Isaac also desired the departure of Jacob lest Esau should kill him, but before going away Jacob came to his father for his blessing again. This Isaac did not withhold, for he still loved him, though not excusing his fault. He charged Jacob to go to Haran, and there to take a wife from the daughters of Laban.

JACOB'S VISION.

In obedience to the wishes of his father, Jacob departed on his journey alone, taking the same route which was travelled by Abraham when he first passed through Canaan on his way from Beersheba to Haran, which had now become a main highway.

As he came in sight of a place which had been his grandfather's encampment, it was late in the evening, and here he lay down to rest for the night. Evidently Jacob carried few if any necessaries with him on the journey, for we are told he gathered some stones together to serve him as a pillow on which to lay his head. Here, in this uncomfortable place, he went to sleep, but never was rest of man more pleasant than that which Jacob had that night. As he slept he had a wondrous dream, wherein appeared to him a vision that revealed the glory of heaven and the blessings which God had in store for him. He saw in the dream a great ladder, resting its foot upon the earth and reaching into heaven, and upon it were ascending and descending radiant angels. Succeeding this vision was another in which God revealed Himself standing above the ladder, and Jacob heard these words: "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it."



JACOB'S VISION.

"Behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."

—GEN. xxviii. 12.

When Jacob awakened he knew that God had taken this means of manifesting His love and provident care, and he said, "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So he took the stones which had served him as a pillow and set them up as an altar, and poured oil upon it, and made a promise to serve God thenceforth, and he called the place Bethel (*House of God*).

JACOB'S HARD SERVICE FOR A WIFE.

After this pious performance Jacob continued on his journey, meeting with no further important incident, until he reached Padan-Aram (Haran), which was the home of his mother's relatives. As he came to the outskirts



JACOB TENDING THE FLOCKS OF LABAN.

"And while he yet spake, Rachel came with her father's sheep."—GEN. xxix. 9.

of the city he saw a well, or, more properly, a spring, by which were lying three flocks of sheep that were waiting to be watered by the shepherds. He asked the men the name of the city to which they belonged, and they answered that they were from Haran. Then he fell into further conversation with them, asking if they knew Laban, and if he was well, etc. But as he

was talking, Rachel, the younger daughter of Laban, approached with another herd of sheep. The spring by which the shepherds were waiting was closed with a large stone, which kept the waters from being muddied or used except at certain intervals in the day when the flocks of the surrounding neighborhood were all brought together to be watered at one time. Then the stone was removed and the herds permitted to drink. When Rachel arrived all the flocks were gathered, hers being the last to arrive, and Jacob went down and rolled the stone from the spring's mouth and helped Rachel water her sheep.



(Copy of the celebrated painting by Raphael.)

JACOB, LEAH AND RACHEL.

"Leah was tender-eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and well favored."—GEN. xxix. 17.

Rachel is represented as having been a beautiful girl, and it is therefore no surprise to learn that Jacob fell at once in love with her, nor did he wait long before beginning his suit, for the Bible tells us that he kissed her beside the spring. After thus warmly saluting her he told Rachel that he was her kinsman, come to visit her father. She was greatly pleased by his favors and ran before him to tell her father of his coming. Laban was no less pleased to receive Jacob's visit, for he hastened out to greet him and kissed him many times tenderly.

Laban had two daughters, the elder of whom was named Leah, and Rachel was the younger. It is said that Leah was tender-eyed and it is supposed that she was not comely in appearance, while Rachel was perfect in every feature and so beautiful that Jacob could not restrain his exceedingly great desire to marry her at once. He therefore asked of Laban her hand in marriage, but this his uncle was not so quick to grant, being of a mercenary nature, who desired to profit by his daughter's comeliness. Perceiving what Laban desired, Jacob offered to serve him for a period of seven years for his daughter, to which proposition Laban consented. So great was Jacob's love for Rachel that his seven years of service "seemed to him but a few days."

When the period of his engagement had expired he asked Laban to give him Rachel, whereupon the crafty uncle brought Leah, heavily veiled, to him in the evening, whom Jacob married under the belief that it was his beloved Rachel. In the morning he discovered the deception that had been practised and asked Laban why he had not fulfilled his agreement, to which Laban made reply, "It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born; we will give thee Rachel also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years." Although this action of Laban was very unjust, it was but a counterpart of the perfidy and deception which Jacob himself had practised on his brother Esau.

The hardship which Laban's second proposition imposed upon Jacob was promptly accepted, for what will not a man do to win the woman he truly loves? So Jacob served seven more years and then wedded Rachel, but after this marriage Laban prevailed on him to remain six years longer for a portion of the produce of the flocks, which were to be distinguished by certain marks.

DEPARTURE OF JACOB AND HIS MEETING WITH ESAU.

After Jacob's last service Laban awarded him a portion of the cattle, sheep and goats, which he had helped to raise, and getting his goods together, he set out with his two wives, Leah and Rachel, for the land of his birth, and to his father, who was still living. Three days after his departure Laban, believing that there had been an unfair division of the herds, and that Jacob had received more than was his due, induced several of his neighbors to join him and together they started in pursuit of Jacob, whom they overtook after seven days' journey at the Mount of Gilead. But the night before Laban came up with Jacob, God appeared to him in a dream and commanded him not to speak to Jacob either good or bad, but this injunction was not literally obeyed, for when he met Jacob he accused him of stealing away his two daughters, and reproached him for not giving due notice of his going that he might have kissed his daughters and sent them away with mirth and song. He again said to Jacob that though it was in his power to do him great injury, he would nevertheless spare him, but that he must return the gods (the things) which he had stolen from him. Jacob replied to him by

saying: "With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live." Then Laban made a search of all that Jacob had, but was unable to find any of the gods which he charged had been stolen. After much dispute between them Laban at length offered to make a covenant with Jacob whereby they should be forever afterward friends, as became their relations to each other. They accordingly gathered a heap of stones as a witness of their covenant, and made a sacrifice upon the mount and afterward feasted in fel-



JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL.

"And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."—GEN. xxxii. 26.

lowship. In the morning Laban blessed Jacob, and kissing his daughters, returned again to Haran, his home.

As Jacob journeyed forward he met a host of angels who stood in his way but did not address him, as they served only as a sign that God was still with him. He therefore called the place of meeting with the angels Mahanaim, meaning the *two camps* or *hosts*. As he was now passing through the land of Edom, he learned that Esau was at the head of an army of many hundred

men in Mount Seir, and he was greatly troubled lest his wronged brother would now fulfil the threat which he had made upon discovering the deceit which robbed him of his father's blessing. To conciliate his brother he sent messengers bearing many presents of cattle, goats and sheep to Esau, and waited to learn what report they would make. Upon their return the messengers told him that Esau would come with four hundred men to meet him, but they were unable to disclose with what purpose. Fearful that Esau's intentions were hostile, Jacob divided his herds and goods into two parts, and said, "If Esau come to one company and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape."

When he had thus prepared for the meeting Jacob prayed to God to deliver him from the hand of his brother. At night he was left alone in meditation, expecting Esau to come, as he had told his messengers in the morning; and while thus communing a man appeared to him and the two

"wrestled" until the break of day when the man, who proved to be the Lord, touched Jacob's thigh and immediately it became out of joint. But Jacob would not release the spirit until it blessed him. Then the Lord gave him His blessing and changed his name from Jacob to that of Israel. And Jacob then knew that he had the favor of God, and so called the place Peniel, saying, "I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved."



MOSQUE OVER MACHPELAH.

Notwithstanding the Lord's assurances Jacob was not yet wholly

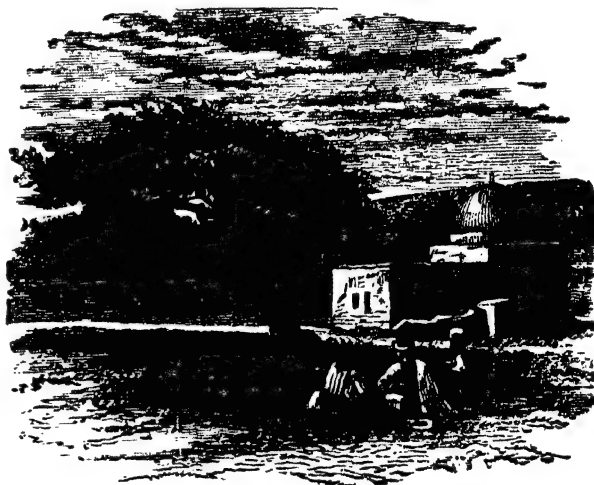
without fear, for when he saw Esau coming he divided his family so that the handmaids and children were in front, and Rachel and Joseph his son, who was born while he was in service to Laban, in the rear, so that in case of an attack being made those he most loved would be the most likely to escape. But all his fears were soon dismissed, for as Esau came near he ran to meet Jacob and fell on his neck and kissed him as a beloved brother. After this happy meeting the brothers were both reconciled and each proffered help to the other, which neither requiring, Esau returned to Seir, while Jacob continued his journey to Succoth where he built a house and made stalls, or booths, for his cattle.

THE BIRTH OF BENJAMIN.

While Jacob was serving with Laban he had four wives, two of whom had been handmaidens to Leah and Rachel, and these several wives bore him twelve sons, the youngest of whom was Joseph, the only son of Rachel until after

his departure from Haran, whose history is perhaps more interesting than that of any other character in the Old Testament. When Jacob had lived a few years at Succoth and Shalem, God told him to remove to Bethel, where he saw the vision when going to visit Laban, and to make an altar there and worship the true God. It appears from the records, that the people who dwelt in Shalem and the country thereabouts were idolaters, nor can we help suspecting, from the character of the narrative, that Jacob, or Israel, was also.

When Jacob prepared to depart for Bethel, he ordered his household, and all who were with him, to put away the strange gods that were with them and to change their garments. In obedience to this command they brought him their gods, which he hid under an oak that grew in Shechem. While stopping at Shalem Jacob's life had not been a happy one, for among other indignities and griefs he suffered was a very great one in the abduction of his daughter Dinah by a prince of the country. But afterward the prince made amends for his folly by marrying Dinah, as Jacob had desired he should, and there was peace between the king (Hamor) and Jacob. Among the sons of Jacob, however, there were two, Simeon and Levi, who were resolved to avenge the wrong done their sister, regardless of their father's will; and accordingly, they stole in upon Hamor, the king, and his son, the husband of Dinah, and killed them both with the sword; they also bore Dinah away, after which the other sons of Jacob fell upon the town, and massacred many of the people, and carried away a large number of women and children captives, besides taking all the cattle, sheep, and household plunder they could find.



RACHEL'S TOMB.

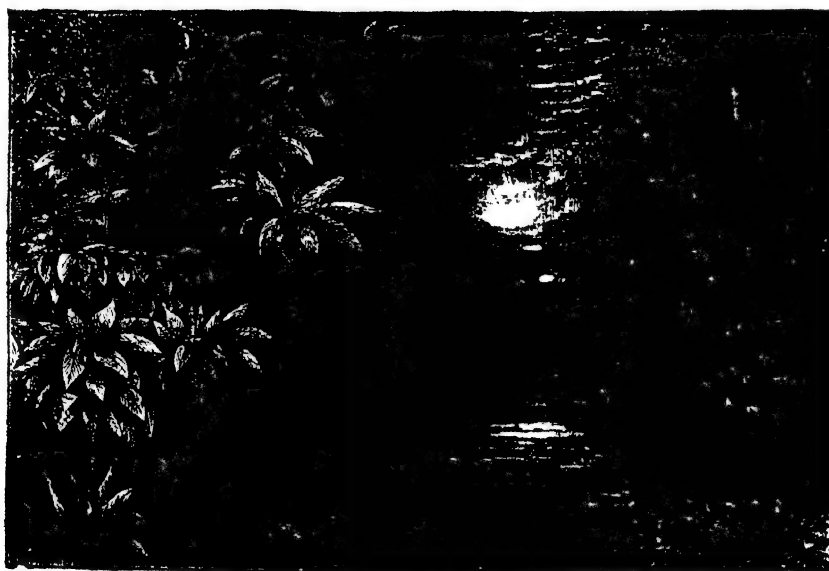
Jacob was intensely grieved at this outrage of his sons, and put a curse upon them. The memory of this wrong no doubt caused him constant pain, and he was therefore glad that God had ordered him to remove from Shalem, but he was destined to meet with much greater sorrow in the new land of his inheritance. As soon as he reached Bethel Jacob built an altar, and called the place El-Bethel, because it was there that God had appeared to him. Directly after the altar was built Deborah, Rachel's nurse, died, and was buried beneath a "weeping oak."

Here God appeared to Jacob again, and told him that his name should henceforth be Israel and not Jacob, as it had continued to be after His first command, and God repeated to Jacob the covenants He had made with Abraham and Isaac, to give him all the land and to make him so great that there should be many kings among his descendants.

THE BEAUTIFUL STORY.

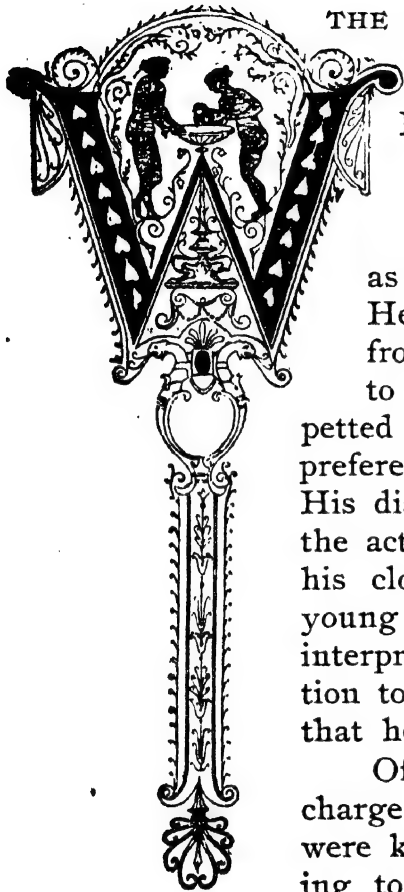
Then Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had talked with God and poured a drink-offering upon it, and called the sacred place Bethel. When Jacob had thus performed the vows which he had made there, after seeing the vision of heaven, he journeyed southward, intending to dwell with his father, Isaac, at Mamre, near Hebron. As they were near Ephrath, which was the ancient name of Bethlehem, Rachel was seized with labor, and died in giving birth to a boy babe whom she called Ben-oni (*son of my sorrow*), but Jacob changed his name to Ben-jamin (*son of the right hand*). Here Rachel was buried, and upon her grave Jacob set a large stone, which so long marked the spot that in modern years a tomb was erected over the grave, which remains to-day a conspicuous object among the sacred mausoleums of Bethlehem.

Jacob then continued his journey southward until he reached the dwelling place of Isaac his father, but had not long been there when Isaac died, being one hundred and eighty years of age. At the time of his death it chanced that Esau was also at Mamre, or near there, for he and Jacob buried their father. Esau afterward went into another country because he and Jacob were so rich with cattle that the land could not sustain the possessions of both.



CHAPTER VI.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.



WHEN Jacob came to live in the region of Mamre, Joseph, who had always been his favorite child, was seventeen years of age, or rather that is the age given him in the Bible when it first mentions him as feeding the flocks with his brethren about Mamre. He was a precocious child, not without his faults, but from the beginning was blessed with such favors as fall to the lot of few boys. After Rachel's death Jacob petted and loved him more fondly even than before, and his preference no doubt served to make of him a spoilt child. His disposition was such that he became a tale-bearer upon the actions of his brothers; besides, the superior beauty of his clothes aroused their jealousy. In addition to this, young Joseph was a dreamer, who insisted upon giving such interpretations to his sleep-visions as displayed his disposition to become a master, so to speak, over his brothers, so that he became offensive to them.

Of the twelve sons which Jacob had, ten of them had charge of his immense herds, while Joseph and Benjamin were kept at home in the favor of their father, having nothing to do save of their own will. But Joseph frequently went out in the fields to his brothers and would as often return to his father with evil reports as to what they said or did.

So angered were they by Joseph's tale-bearing that they resolved to kill him upon the next favorable opportunity. Soon after this wicked determination had been made, Jacob sent Joseph out to find his brothers and to bring him back a report of how they were discharging their duties. Joseph went to the pasturage, where he expected to find them grazing the herds, but they were not to be seen, so he wandered about in quest of them until he met a man who told him his brothers had departed for Dothan, which was not a great distance from the usual grazing grounds. Joseph set off at once for Dothan, where he found his brothers; but as he drew near the resolve which they had before made came stronger than ever upon them, and some of the brothers said they should slay him and cast his body into a pit, and report to their father

that he had been devoured by some wild beast. No doubt they would have thus killed Joseph had it not been for Reuben, who was a son of Jacob by his wife Leah, who begged his brothers not to shed blood, but to rid themselves of Joseph by casting him into a pit that was in the wilderness thereabouts.

JOSEPH SOLD TO THE EGYPTIANS.

Reuben's advice appeared good to his brothers, for when Joseph came up they stripped him of his coat of many colors and threw him into a deep but dry pit, where they left him helpless. After so doing and having sat down to eat their noon meal, a caravan of Midianite merchants, from Arabia, came in sight on their way to Egypt with Syrian spices. Judah, also a son of Leah, now proposed to his brothers that they sell Joseph, rather than allow him to die of hunger in the pit, though his elder brother Reuben had resolved secretly to rescue him when his brothers should go away. Judah's proposition found favor with all the brothers, so that when the travelling merchants were about arrived the brothers drew Joseph up out of the pit and sold him to the Midianite merchants for twenty shekels (\$12.50) of silver.

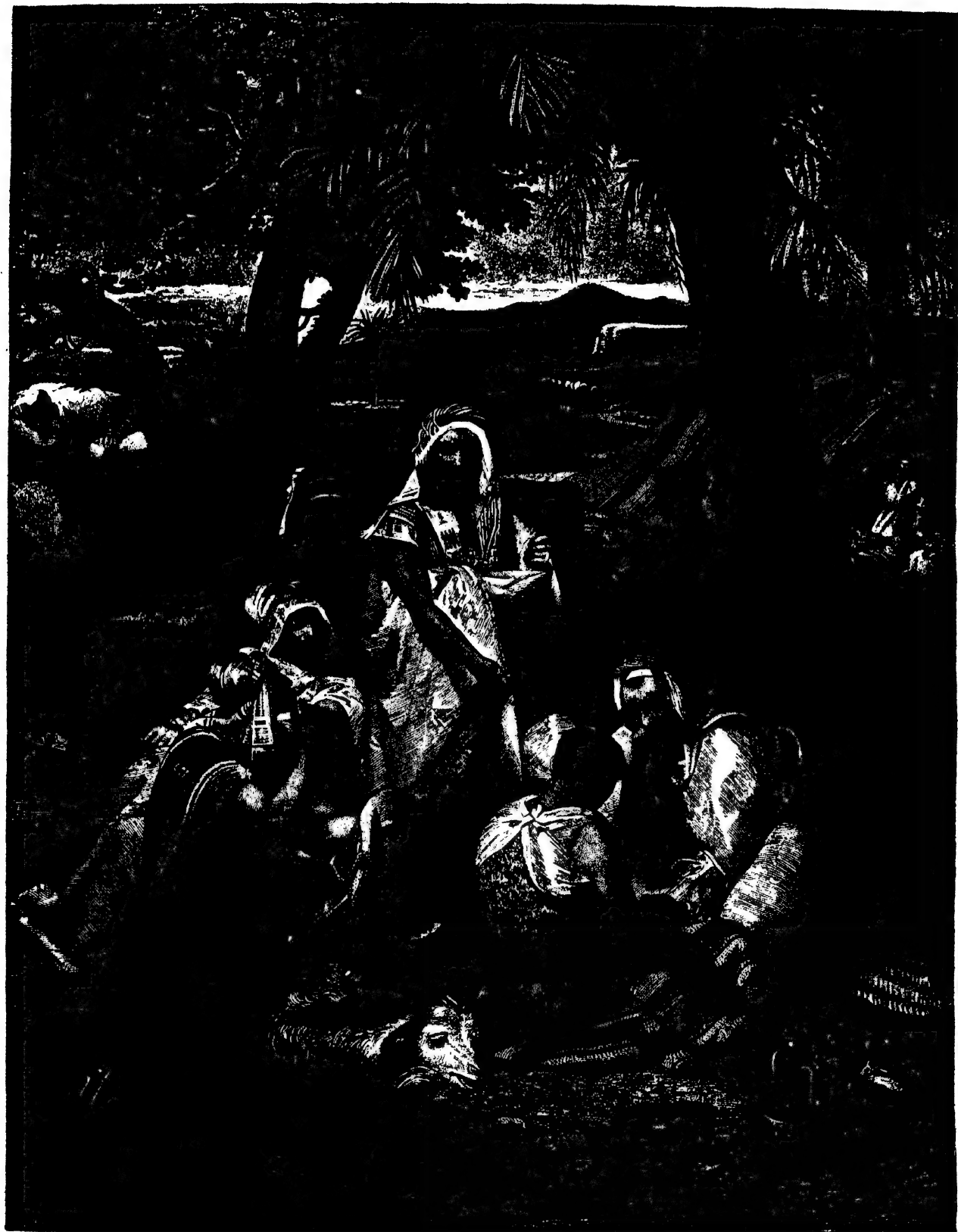
To conceal their wicked action from Jacob, the brothers killed a kid, the blood of which they sprinkled over the pretty coat they had stripped from Joseph, and bearing this to their father, as an evidence of the tale they were to tell, declared to him that Joseph had been devoured by a wild beast. This dreadful news bore heavily upon Jacob, who refused to be comforted, and in his grief he tore his clothes, and said he should go to his grave mourning for his son.

JOSEPH BECOMES AN INTERPRETER OF DREAMS.

The Midianite merchants, who were Ishmaelites, descendants of Abraham's son Ishmael, took Joseph and carried him to Egypt, where they sold him to a captain in Pharaoh's army, named Potiphar. In the service of this officer Joseph continued for some time and with such faithfulness that Potiphar at length made him chief over all his other servants and showed him many favors.

Potiphar's wife was a worldly woman who, seeing that Joseph was a handsome young man, became jealous of him because he would not pay her such attentions as she solicited, and to avenge the rejection of her wicked proposals she falsely accused Joseph to her husband and had him cast into prison, where he remained for two years. During this time his actions were so gentle that he won the favor of the prison keeper, who committed to Joseph's care all the other prisoners.

After Joseph had been in prison for some time it happened that Pharaoh became greatly angered at some offense committed by his chief butler and his chief baker, and cast them into prison with Joseph, and so he came to have charge of them also. One morning, upon the awakening of the two offending officers of the king, they told Joseph of the dreams which each had had during the night, and which caused them much grief, for they believed that their



JOSEPH CAST INTO THE PIT.

(77)

"And they sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver."—GEN. xxxvii. 28.

dreams were indicative of some great punishment which Pharaoh would inflict upon them. The chief butler described his vision as follows: "In my dream, behold a vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes; and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand."



JOSEPH'S DREAM.

When Joseph had heard the butler's dream he gave him the interpretation by declaring that in three days Pharaoh would deliver him from prison, and restore him again to his former place as chief butler. After showing the butler the meaning of his dream, Joseph begged him, upon the fulfilment thereof, that he would tell Pharaoh of the injustice of his imprisonment, and that he had been sold into bondage by his wicked brothers, hoping thus to re his own release.

When Joseph had given an interpretation of the butler's dream, the chief

baker described the vision which he had also had and requested an interpretation thereof. In his dream he said he bore three baskets on his head, setting one within the other, and that in the topmost one there was a great variety of baked meats, which the birds flew upon and ate. Then Joseph told him that in three days Pharaoh would call him from prison and hang him upon a tree, and that while thus hanging the birds would come and eat the flesh from his body.

On the third day thereafter, as Joseph had prophesied, according to the dreams, Pharaoh gave a large dinner to his servants in honor of his birthday, and pardoned his chief butler and restored him, as was predicted, but the chief baker was hanged.

JOSEPH INTERPRETING PHARAOH'S DREAM.

Although everything had been fulfilled according to the interpretations made by Joseph, the chief butler did not keep his promise to tell Pharaoh of the wrongs which had been done the Hebrew youth, nor did he try to secure the release of Joseph, who continued languishing in prison nearly two years after the liberation of the butler. At the expiration of this period an incident occurred which was of the most portentous importance to Joseph, as it served to prove most conclusively his gift of revelation, and to establish him in Pharaoh's favor as a man endowed with the blessings of God. This special incident was in the nature of a warning which God gave to Pharaoh in a dream, in which the king thought he stood beside a river, out of which rose seven fat cattle that fell to grazing in a meadow. Following the seven fat cattle were seven others that were lean and ill-favored, and these went also to the meadow beside the river, and ate up all the seven that were fat. This was Pharaoh's first dream, but he fell asleep again and dreamed that he saw a field of corn, on the stalks of which grew seven large ears fully matured, but while looking upon these, other stalks grew out of the same ground, each of which bore seven blasted ears, and these thin and immature ears devoured those that were large and perfect.

These two dreams so deeply troubled Pharaoh that he sent to all the magicians in Egypt that he might obtain an interpreter, but none of them were wise enough to tell him the significance of his visions. As the desire of the king became noised about the chief butler remembered how Joseph had interpreted the dreams of himself and of the baker, so he went to Pharaoh and told him how truly Joseph had prophesied, and advised that he be sent for.

The king immediately dispatched a messenger to bring Joseph to him, so the young Hebrew hastily shaved himself, changed his clothes and appeared before the king as he was bid. And when the young man came before the throne Pharaoh told him that he had heard of how he had interpreted dreams while in prison and asked him if he could understand and interpret all dreams. Joseph replied, "It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

When Joseph had thus answered, Pharaoh related to him the two dreams which so troubled him, whereupon Joseph gave him the interpretation as follows: The two dreams he pronounced as one in meaning, since they both presaged that the seven succeeding years would be seasons of great abundance throughout all Egypt, but the next seven years would be seasons of famine, when the land would produce nothing, so that distress for food would prevail among all who did not take advantage of the seven years of plenty to fill their granaries and thus provide against the seven seasons of failure.

THE FAMINE.

Pharaoh perceived that Joseph had given him the true significance of his dreams, and determined to provide against the predicted famine by appointing Joseph the receiver of tithes and the collector of such portions of the crops as he might levy during the seven years of plenty. But as a mark of his great favor Pharaoh made Joseph ruler of all Egypt and put a gold chain about his neck and made him ride next to his own chariot, while the people were ordered to bow down to him.

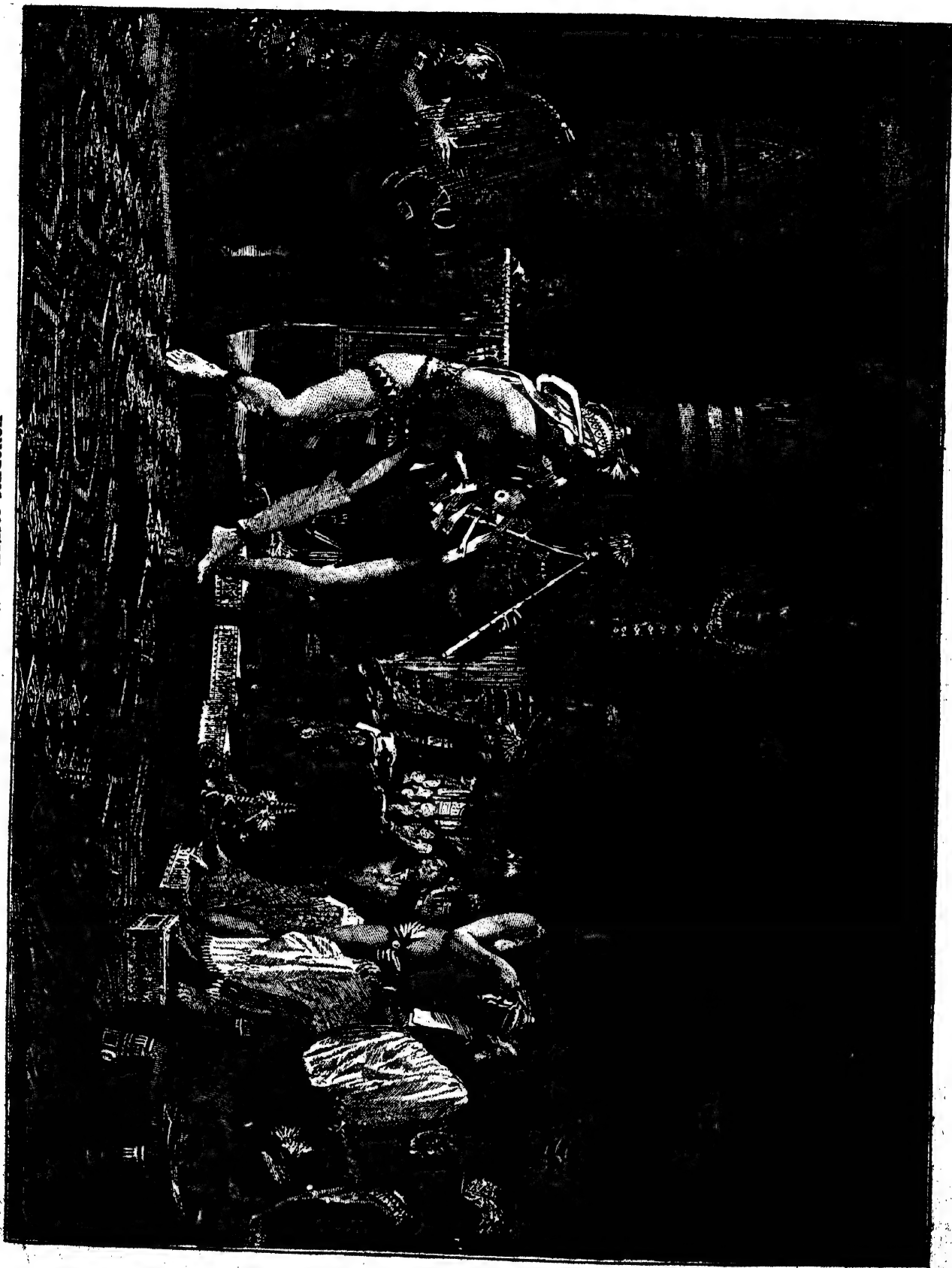
As all provision to guard against the coming famine had thus been given to Joseph to make, he set about his duty by ordering large storehouses to be made in all parts of the country, which he filled by raising the royal impost of one-tenth on the produce of the land to one-fifth, which was no hardship on the people to pay, because for seven years the crops were so great that the people could hardly take care of them, and were therefore inclined to wastefulness.

True to Joseph's predictions, the beginning of the second seven years was marked by a blasting of the crops; which continued until great want was felt throughout the land, and immense numbers of people would have starved but for the beneficent provisions made by Joseph. He now opened the storehouses and from them supplied the wants of all who would come to buy.

The famine was not confined to Egypt, but extended into Canaan, Syria and other countries, where it was so dreadful that the people of those lands were compelled to come to Joseph to buy grain to avoid starvation.

So large were the purchases made of Joseph during the first two years of the famine, that all the money of the Egyptians and Canaanites had passed into the treasury of Pharaoh. The authority which Joseph thereafter exercised over the Egyptians was somewhat despotic, though hardly so oppressive as we might expect it would be among a people that were noted for their custom of reducing the poor to slavery. The people who were no longer able to pay for the provisions they needed were removed from the country to the cities, but were still allowed to cultivate the lands, which had thus passed to Pharaoh, by a payment of one-fifth of the produce to the crown, and this hard condition caused the permanent loss of tenure of land in Egypt.

HONORING JOSEPH IN THE PALACE OF PHARAOH.



JOSEPH REFUSES TO DISCLOSE HIMSELF TO HIS BROTHERS.

Jacob, who still lived in Canaan, though an extremely rich man, did not escape the terrible effects of the famine, and was forced to send also to Pharaoh for grain to feed his household and famishing herds. Many years had now passed since Joseph was sold into bondage, for at the time of the beginning of the famine he was nearly forty years of age, while at the time of his sale he was but seventeen. Yet in all these years Jacob had believed his son to be dead, having heard no word from him, nor did any of his sons reveal the secret of their wickedness, little caring what had become of the brother.

When Jacob's granaries were emptied he sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy corn, but kept Benjamin, the youngest, with him, lest some harm might befall him, as he was now his father's favorite and consolation.

When the ten brothers came to Joseph he recognized all of them immediately, but they in turn did not know him, for they had never thought of their servant brother becoming a ruler over so great a country as Egypt. In order to confuse them, or test their fidelity, Joseph accused his brothers of being spies come from Canaan to observe the poverty and weakness of Egypt. To their protestations of denial Joseph answered that as one of the brothers had been kept by his father in Canaan, he would keep them in prison and treat them as spies until this one was also brought to him. So he cast all his brothers into prison, but on the third day he went to them and said that he knew the famine was severe in Canaan and that he would therefore permit nine of them to return, laden with grain, to their father, but that he would retain one as a hostage for the bringing to him of their youngest brother. The brothers were very sorrowful because of these conditions, and became conscience stricken as Reuben reminded them how they had turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of Joseph when they sold him to the Midianite merchants.

Joseph at length chose to hold Simeon, and accordingly bound him before his brothers and then sent the others away with their sacks filled with corn; but he ordered that the money which the brothers had paid for the corn should be secretly placed in the sacks. As they journeyed back home with their asses laden with grain they stopped at noon-time to give their animals food, when to their astonishment, as they opened the sacks to get food for the asses, each one found the money that he had paid to Joseph in the mouth of the bag, and they believed that it was a miracle.

MEETING OF JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN.

When the brothers reached home they told their father all that had happened to them, of how harshly the governor of Egypt had treated them and ~~he had retained Simeon as a hostage for the bringing to him of Benjamin.~~ At this sad news Jacob was deeply distressed, for he could not bear to part with Benjamin. Reuben thereupon said to his father, "Slay my two sons, if



JOSEPH INTERPRETING PHARAOH'S DREAM.

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"Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon."—GEN. xli. 14.

I bring him not to thee; deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again." But Jacob would not consent.

When the corn which they brought was all eaten, Jacob told his sons to go again into Egypt and buy more, but they replied that the governor had said that they should not see his face again unless they brought their youngest brother with them. Then Judah begged his father to trust Benjamin into his care, giving his oath to return him again or accept all the blame forever thereafter. At length Jacob consented, but he told his sons to take presents of fruits, spices, honey, myrrh and balm with them, and also the money found in their sacks, lest there might have been an oversight.

With the blessings of their father the brothers departed again, with double money and presents, and took Benjamin with them. They journeyed on and soon came before Joseph, who commanded that they be brought in to dine with him. This order excited their fears afresh, because now they believed they were apprehended to be punished for not paying for the corn they had bought on the first visit, and so they told the steward of Joseph's house of how they had found the money they had paid to Joseph tied up with the grain in their sacks after departing, and that they had therefore brought it back again. The steward assured them that there was no cause for alarm and that God had given them the treasure in their sacks. He then brought water for them to wash their feet and provender for their asses, after which Simeon was brought out to them.

Joseph returned to his brothers at noon, and asked diligently about the health of his father, and then inquired if the young man was Benjamin. Finding it to be so, Joseph was so overjoyed that he had to hasten from his brothers to find a place to weep where they could not see him. When he returned to them again all the brothers set before him the presents that they had brought, and then the tables were made ready for dinner: one table being set for Joseph, one for his brothers, and a third for the Egyptians that were invited. But as they began to eat Joseph set dishes before them with his own hands, and before Benjamin he placed five times as much food as before the others, and they all drank and were merry.

After the feast was over Joseph commanded his steward to fill up the sacks of his brothers with corn, and into each place the money that they had paid for the grain, but into the sack of Benjamin he ordered the steward to put a silver cup.

In the morning the brothers were sent on their way, but when they had got outside the city Joseph ordered his steward to set after them and to bring them back, and to charge them with stealing a silver cup and money also. The steward did as he was ordered, and when he came up with them he accused the brothers of offending his master by robbing him of a silver cup. They loudly protested their innocence, and freely offered to unloose their sacks, that he might see they had none of the things which they were accused

of stealing. So the steward searched the sacks, beginning with that of the oldest and ending with that of Benjamin, in whose sack he found the cup.

Now were the brothers covered with confusion, knowing their innocence, and yet overwhelmed with the evidence of guilt, and they rent their clothes with grief, but saddled up their asses, and with their sacks they returned to Joseph, who was expecting them; and when they appeared before him he asked, "What deed is this that ye have done?" Then he told them that the man in whose sack the cup was found should be his servant, but that the other brothers should return in peace to their father.

Judah, who had so earnestly besought his father to give Benjamin into his care, and who had vowed to return him safely, was now stricken with such deep sorrow that we cannot read the suffering, agonizing plea which he offered to Joseph without feeling a portion of the grief that moved him. Approaching his royal brother with a humility and dejection which plainly reflected the agony of his mind, he begged that he would listen to the sorrowful circumstances which had brought him and his brethren again to Egypt. He reminds Joseph how he had truly answered all his inquiries, in which he had told why Benjamin the youngest, his father's comforter, had not come with them on the first visit, and the sad cause that had brought him now. He then pleads for the life of his old father, who will surely be brought to the grave with grief if Benjamin is not permitted to return, for that Jacob had mourned continually for the loss of his son Joseph, and now to remove from him his other favorite would inflict upon him a burden greater than he could bear, "for his life is bound up in that of the lad." As a last plea for his young brother, Judah begs Joseph to take him as a bondman in Benjamin's place, and to let the lad return to his doting father.

This last soul-sorrowing supplication was more than Joseph could bear, and he commanded every one to go out of the room except his brothers, and when they were alone he burst out crying and revealed himself to his brothers, saying: "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life."

Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers for their wickedness in conspiring to take his life, and afterward in selling him into bondage, is beautifully expressed in the sacred records, wherein he is made to say:

"Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me Lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast; and there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. . . And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my



FINDING THE CUP IN BENJAMIN'S SACK.

"He searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack."—GEN. xliv. 12.

father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren and wept upon them."

When it was told to Pharaoh that Joseph's brothers had come, he told Joseph to load all their animals with grain and let them return to their father, and to take wagons and bring back to Egypt Jacob and his household, and that he would give him everything good that was in the land.



JOSEPH REVEALING HIMSELF TO HIS BROTHERS.

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph."—GEN. xlv. 3.

To the brothers Pharaoh spoke, saying, "Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all Egypt is yours."

MEETING OF JOSEPH AND HIS FATHER.

Joseph's brothers departed for their home with many wagons and provisions for the journey, and other marks of kindness from both him and Pharaoh, including changes of clothing and money. Benjamin received five times as much

as was given to the other brothers, which was because of his nearness of kinship to Joseph. When they reached Beersheba they ran joyfully to their father and told him the glad news of how Joseph was yet living and had been exalted to the rulership of all Egypt, and that he had sent them to bring their father to him.

When Jacob heard all that had been told his heart fainted, for he did not believe them, while the grief which he had felt for the loss of Joseph was brought back fresh again to him. When he saw the wagons and presents which his son had sent, his spirit revived and he then believed. The reaction from despondency which he had before felt to that of transporting happiness which followed the satisfying evidence that Joseph was indeed still living, was extremely great, as may be imagined, and was a fitting conclusion to the wonderful succession of surprises which had come to himself and sons during the short period since they had first gone to Egypt to buy corn.

When Jacob believed that Joseph was still living he became all impatience to go immediately to see him; but before setting out on the journey he did not neglect to make sacrifices unto God, who appeared to him in a vision at night, and said, "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation." Jacob at once collected together all his household, including his sons' wives, and his grandchildren, sixty-six in number, and all his goods and his herds, and went to Egypt. As the caravan reached the land of Goshen, which is on the frontier of Egypt, and which was to be the dwelling-place of Jacob, having been given to him by Pharaoh, Joseph came out to meet him in a chariot. What a sublimely beautiful though pathetic spectacle was now to be presented! More than twenty years had passed since the sad news was brought to Jacob that Joseph, his best beloved, had been torn and eaten by wild beasts; and behold, in his old age, his heart was lifted out of its long grief by the enrapturing tidings that this cruel story was false, and that the lost son was to be restored to him; not as the little boy who went out in the fields, clothed in beautifully colored raiment, to bring report of the doings of his brothers, but as a man, grown to full estate, and wearing the purple of authority, the greatest ruler in all Egypt, yet no less the loving son.

When Joseph perceived his aged father approaching, he ran to meet him, and falling on his neck wept with that joy which may best be described as lifting us from earth into the blissful condition of angels. Jacob was equally overcome, for he said, in the pride and happiness of his heart, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive."

JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH'S CHILDREN AND DIES.

When Jacob was brought before Pharaoh, he was questioned by the king as to his age and possessions, to which Jacob replied that he was then a hundred and thirty years old, during which time his sorrows had been very great. Pharaoh seems to have been much affected by Jacob's story of his

griefs, but was no doubt influenced more by the estimation in which he held Joseph in his gifts to Israel—which Jacob and his household were now called. The land of Goshen, also called Rameses, was a most fruitful district near the eastern confines of Egypt, and was a considerable territory. All this Pharaoh gave to Jacob, besides ordering Joseph to sustain the household until the famine abated.

Jacob lived in Goshen for seventeen years, and was now so old that his eyesight, like that of his father Isaac in his last years, had so failed him that he could no longer see. Realizing that his death was near at hand he sent for Joseph and his two sons, named Manasseh and Ephraim, who were born to him by his wife, Asenath, whom he had married directly after interpreting Pharaoh's dream. When they arrived Jacob summoned his strength and sat up in bed, and after telling Joseph how God had blessed him and the promises made toward his descendants, he called his two grandsons to give them his blessings. Being blind he had to trust his touch, as Isaac had, so that when the boys came to him he felt them, to distinguish the elder from the younger. Joseph desired that his father's first blessing should be given to Manasseh, the elder, but Jacob, remembering how he, being younger than his brother Esau, had taken the blessing from his father, chose to give the greater blessing to Ephraim, which he accordingly did. Following this he called all of his own sons together, the twelve mentioned, and giving to Joseph a double portion, he divided the rest of his possessions among the others, and then gave a prophecy of what should be the career of each. Through Judah, who pleaded so hard before Joseph for the release of Benjamin, Jacob declared should come the Redeemer (Shiloh). Reuben, through his instability, should not excel; Simeon and Levi, for the wrong they did in putting Hamor and his son, the husband of Dinah, to the sword, should be cursed for their anger, and their descendants scattered in Israel; Zebulun should dwell by the sea, and keep a haven for ships; Issachar should be a servant to carry heavy burdens; Dan was appointed to be a judge of one of the tribes of Israel; Gad would be overcome, but being a great warrior, should become victorious over his enemies at last; Asher was appointed to great riches; Naphtali should be a counsellor; Benjamin was to become a great warrior, who would never be satisfied with his conquests, and would fight if for no other reason than for the spoils that he might take.

For Joseph was reserved all the good things that might be given through the favor of God, but already had his destiny been almost complete, since the position to which he had attained was equal to that of king of a great country. These twelve sons afterward became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, and will be frequently mentioned in subsequent narratives.

After finishing the giving of his prophetic blessings, Jacob charged his sons after his death to bury him in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, where already reposed the bodies of his parents and grandparents, and of his wife Leah. When he had thus commanded them, "he gathered up his feet

into the bed, and yielded up the ghost," aged one hundred and forty-seven years.

When his father was dead Joseph threw himself upon the body in a wild passion of grief and kissed it repeatedly. He then ordered his physicians to embalm his precious dead, and kept the body in his house for a period of forty days, as was the custom of the Egyptians, but his period of mourning was



THE BODY OF JACOB EMBALMED.

"And the physicians embalmed Israel."—GEN. 1. 2.

for seventy days. The body was now taken by Joseph and his brothers, who were followed by all the servants in Pharaoh's house, and the prominent people of Egypt, in chariots and on horseback, "to the threshing floor of Atad," which was near the Jordan River. Here they halted and went into mourning for seven days, after which the body was carried to the place designated in Jacob's last request, and deposited in the sepulchre with his fathers.

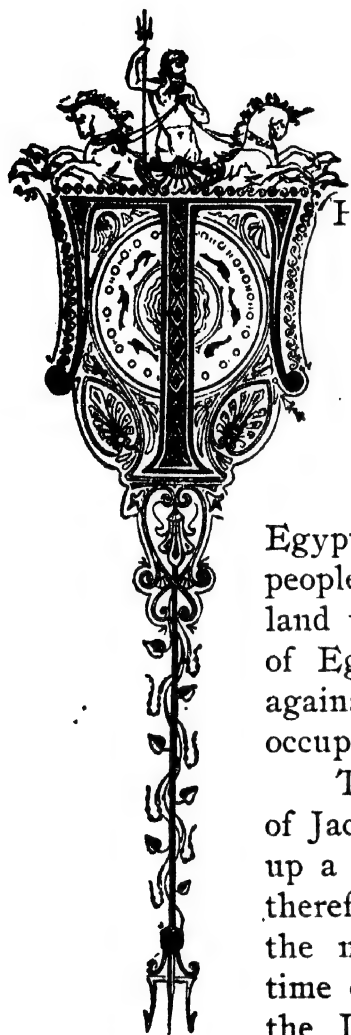
When they had returned from the burial of their father, Joseph's brothers expressed fear that now he would punish them for their iniquity in selling him into bondage, and to propitiate his anger they fell down at his feet and begged him to forgive them, offering to remain forever his servants if he would but spare them. At this Joseph wept, sorrowful that they should believe he harbored any desire for revenge. But he soon dismissed their fears, by promising to do God's will in all things and to provide for both them and their children.

There is little more recorded in the Bible about Joseph after his father's death, as it merely tells us that he continued to dwell in Egypt, with his relatives, until he was one hundred and ten years of age, and had seen the third generation of his son Ephraim, and had held the grandchildren of his son Manasseh on his knee. At this age he died and was embalmed and buried in Egypt. Many years afterward, when the Israelites reached Canaan, the remains of Joseph were carried over to Sychem and laid in the sepulchre with his father.



CHAPTER VII.

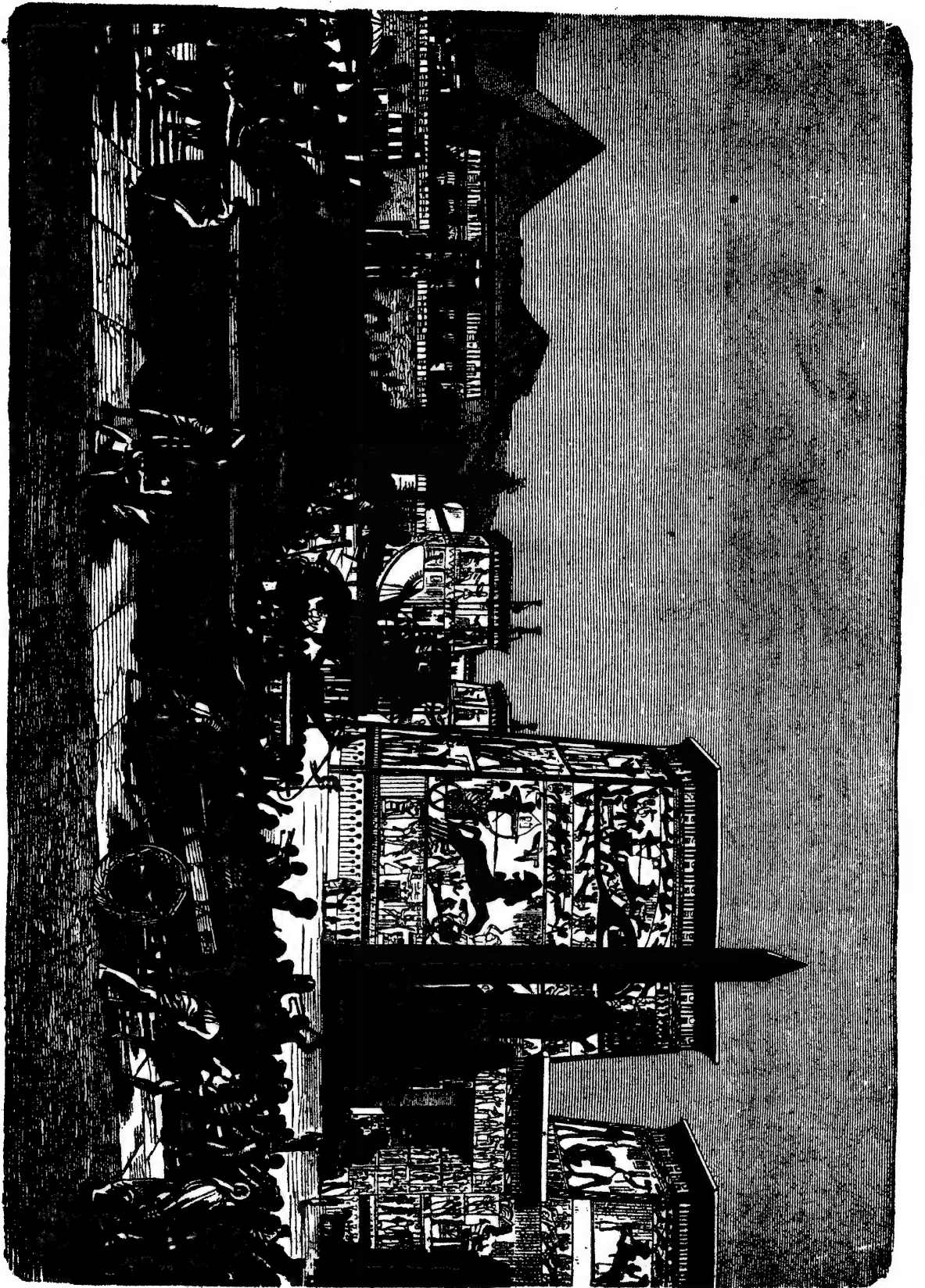
THE STORY OF MOSES.



If Egyptians were always enemies of the Jews, and even in the time of Joseph, who was himself a Hebrew, it was not permitted the Jews to sit at table with the Egyptians. Thus we saw, in the preceding chapter, that when Joseph's brothers came to him on their second visit to buy corn, when he had ordered them to dine with him, he had three tables prepared: one for himself, one for his brothers, and another for the Egyptians who were in his house. Though Pharaoh and his people were content to care for the household of Jacob, the land which was given them in Goshen lay outside the borders of Egypt, probably on the frontier of Syria, as the sentiment against the Jews would not permit of even Joseph's relatives occupying a part of the Egyptian territory proper.

The story of the oppressions of the Israelites, descendants of Jacob, who was called Israel, begins thus, "Now there rose up a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph." We are therefore not informed of the circumstances which gave rise to the new dynasty succeeding Pharaoh who was king at the time of Joseph. The sacred record does tell us, however, that the Israelites, or Jews of modern history, had increased so rapidly that the king of Egypt grew fearful lest they should become more numerous than his own people, or that they might unite with other enemies of the Egyptians and make war against him. This question of the Jewish increase became such a serious one at length that measures were taken to limit it, and also to prevent them from emigrating, which the levy of burdens might prompt them to do. Accordingly, Pharaoh, the new king, appointed taskmasters over the Jews and in other respects also reduced them to a state of bondage. The heaviest burdens were imposed upon the unhappy Jews, by which they were compelled to build the treasure cities of Pithom and Raamses. But notwithstanding the severity of their labor the Jews continued to multiply as rapidly as before.

Seeing the futility of his measures thus far, Pharaoh adopted new and more rigorous ones, by which the children of the Jews were forced to perform the



JEWS IN BONDAGE TO THE EGYPTIANS.

"Therefore they did set over them taskmasters, to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities."—Ex. i. ii.

hardest labor, such as the carrying of brick and mortar, and exposing them to the hardships and exposures of the field. To this was next added a yet more severe law commanding the midwives to kill every male child born to the Jews, though they were ordered to spare all the female children.

BIRTH AND FINDING OF MOSES.

While these dreadfully restrictive measures were in force, a descendant of Levi, one of Jacob's sons, married a Jewess of the same descent, by whom he had a son. The mother, to save her child from being killed according to the law, hid him for three months, but not being able, from her poverty, to keep him longer concealed, she made a basket of willows and covered it with slime and pitch so that it might float; she then placed her babe in this frail shallop and laid it among the flags of the river (Nile) brink. The mother then stationed the babe's sister, Miriam, a little way off to see what might happen to the child.

It is most probable that the place wherein the basket was placed was one frequented by members of the royal household, for we are told that soon after, Pharaoh's daughter, attended by her maids, came down to bathe at this very place. Discovering the child in the basket, by hearing its cries, she ordered her maid to bring it to her. While holding the child she saw that it was of Hebrew parentage; Miriam, now perceiving her opportunity, asked if she should get a Hebrew mother to nurse it, to which the kind-hearted princess gave her consent, and as the babe's mother was near by she was called, and it was given into her care, with the promise of the princess to pay her wages for rearing it.

After some years, the child, which had now grown greatly, was brought to Pharaoh's daughter, who accepted him as her son, and called his name Moses, which means "taken out of the water."

THE MANHOOD OF MOSES.

After the adoption of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter we have no further record concerning him until, according to the authority of St. Stephen, he was forty years of age, when we are told that one day, while Moses was watching the hard labor of his people, he saw an Egyptian (taskmaster, presumed,) beating one of his Hebrew brethren. Evidently, all who were witnesses of this assault were Hebrews, for Moses looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man (Egyptian) in sight, he slew the Egyptian, and buried him in the sand.

On the next day, as Moses was walking out he saw two Jews fighting, whom he so soundly reprimanded that one of them asked who had made him a prince and a judge, and then taunted him with having killed and hid the Egyptian. Pharaoh was thus apprised of the murder, and resolved to kill Moses for the crime, but he fled and went to Midian, which was in Arabia, and there sat down by a well to rest and refresh himself.

While thus resting, seven daughters of a Midian priest, named Jethro, came there to water their father's flocks, and after they had filled the troughs some shepherds came up and drove them away, but Moses came to their aid and gallantly watered their flocks for them. For this kind act he was invited to the house of Jethro, where he lived but a short time before the priest gave him one of his daughters, Zipporah, in marriage, by whom Moses had one son that he named Gershom. It is somewhat singular that no mention whatever is made of this son, or of Zipporah either, beyond the mere statement of the marriage and birth. It is probable that Gershom died in infancy for had he grown to manhood he would have almost certainly succeeded to some hereditary office, unless he was ineligible by reason of some sin, or mental incapacity. The four sons of Aaron, as we shall presently see, were installed in the priestly office directly after they became of age, or, rather, almost immediately upon the completion of the Tabernacle, but Moses left no children that figured in the sacred history.

MOSES DELIVERS THE ISRAELITES.

Moses remained with Jethro attending his herds for several years, nearly forty, by some authorities, when one day as he drove the cattle to a new pasturage at the Mount of Horeb, an angel appeared to him, assuming the appearance of a burning bush, out of which God called to him. When Moses had made answer the voice told him to take off his sandals because the place was holy ground. The voice then continuing told him of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that the burdens and sorrows of the Israelites, under their cruel Egyptian taskmasters, had excited God's compassion. The voice therefore spoke further to Moses, commanding him to go to Pharaoh and procure the release of his people from bondage, by means which would be placed within his power. Moses was then further instructed as to what he should do, and was permitted to perform miracles by which he would be able to convince the Israelites that he was indeed sent to deliver them.

Moses had a brother named Aaron, three years his elder, concerning whose birth the Bible tells us nothing. It may be that the word "brother" here means that Aaron was only a member of his tribe; or, possibly, that the two were half-brothers; in either event, the importance of exactness in the narrative is not great. We are told that while God was manifesting Himself to Moses, Aaron was journeying to meet him, and that the two met at Mount Horeb, where Moses told his brother of the wonderful things which God had just performed, and of his call to go back into Egypt to deliver his people. Aaron was an eloquent man, while Moses was, as he admits, slow of tongue, so the Lord said to him that Aaron should help him to talk to the people, and that he, too, would be given the power to perform miracles.

It was not without much persuasion upon the part of God, who at length became angered, that Moses consented to do that which he was bidden, for he doubted, even in the face of the many miracles which God wrought before



him, his fitness for the work of deliverance, or that God would help him as He promised. These doubts, however, were finally removed, and Moses, first gaining the consent of Jethro, his father-in-law, set out with his wife and two sons for Egypt. As they came again to Mount Horeb, Aaron met them and they travelled together until they came to a caravansary, or inn, where, after stopping for the night, Moses' wife was prevailed upon to return to her father, since the hardships of the journey were too great for herself and her young babe.

MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

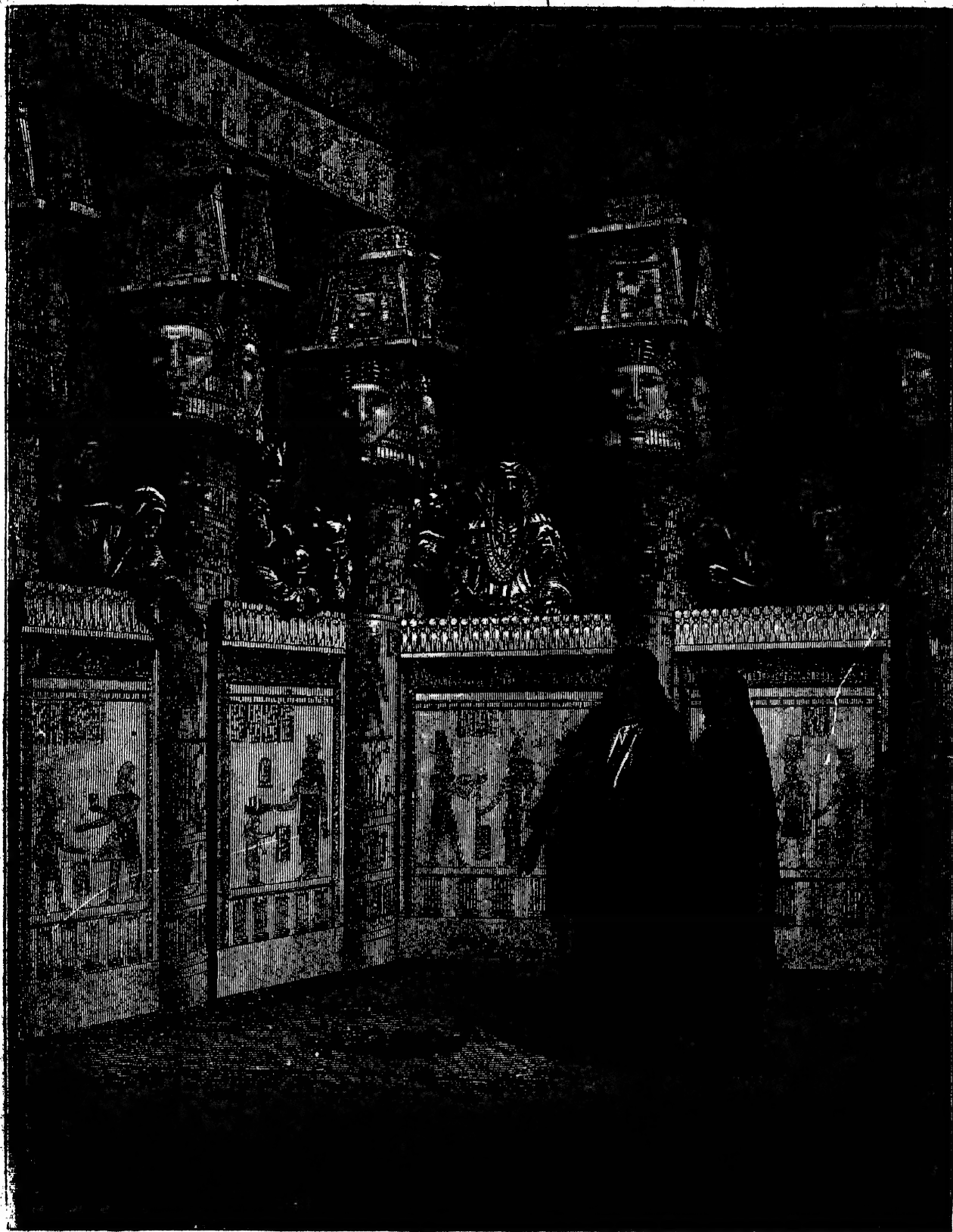
The two brothers, upon reaching Egypt, called at once upon the priests, or elders, of the Israelites, to whom they told how God had called them to deliver the people out of bondage, and, as a sign of the power which the Lord had given them, they changed their rods into serpents, which convinced the elders. In all that was said Aaron acted as the mouthpiece of Moses, for to one was given the ability to direct, while the other was endowed with the gift of eloquence.

When they had explained their mission to the elders, who were to then prepare the Israelites for their freedom, Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh and asked him to allow the Hebrews to go three days' journey into the wilderness and make a feast, but Pharaoh evidently perceived the intention of Moses, and instead of granting the request he imposed fresh burdens upon the Israelites. These increased hardships made the Israelites regret that Moses had ever designed their freedom, and they besought him to cease his efforts for their release. Even Moses himself was overcome by the sad results of his attempts to procure the deliverance of his people, for he went out into a field and cried to the Lord, "Wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? for since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all."

THE TEN PLAGUES.

When Moses had thus complained, God answered him by saying that now should He drive Pharaoh with a strong hand, and renewed His promise to bring the Israelites out of bondage. God also renewed the covenant which He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and told Moses that His name should now be Jehovah, by which He had never before been called. Then God said that Aaron should be the prophet, to declare to Pharaoh what should come to pass, and to foretell the afflictions which should be brought upon the Egyptians if Pharaoh persisted in refusing to give the Hebrews their freedom.

Moses and Aaron were now commanded to go again to Pharaoh, at which time we are told that Moses was eighty and Aaron was eighty-three years of age. As they came before the king to show him the power which God had given them, and that their request for the deliverance of the Israelites was



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MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

"And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, . . . and it became a serpent."—Ex. vii. 10.

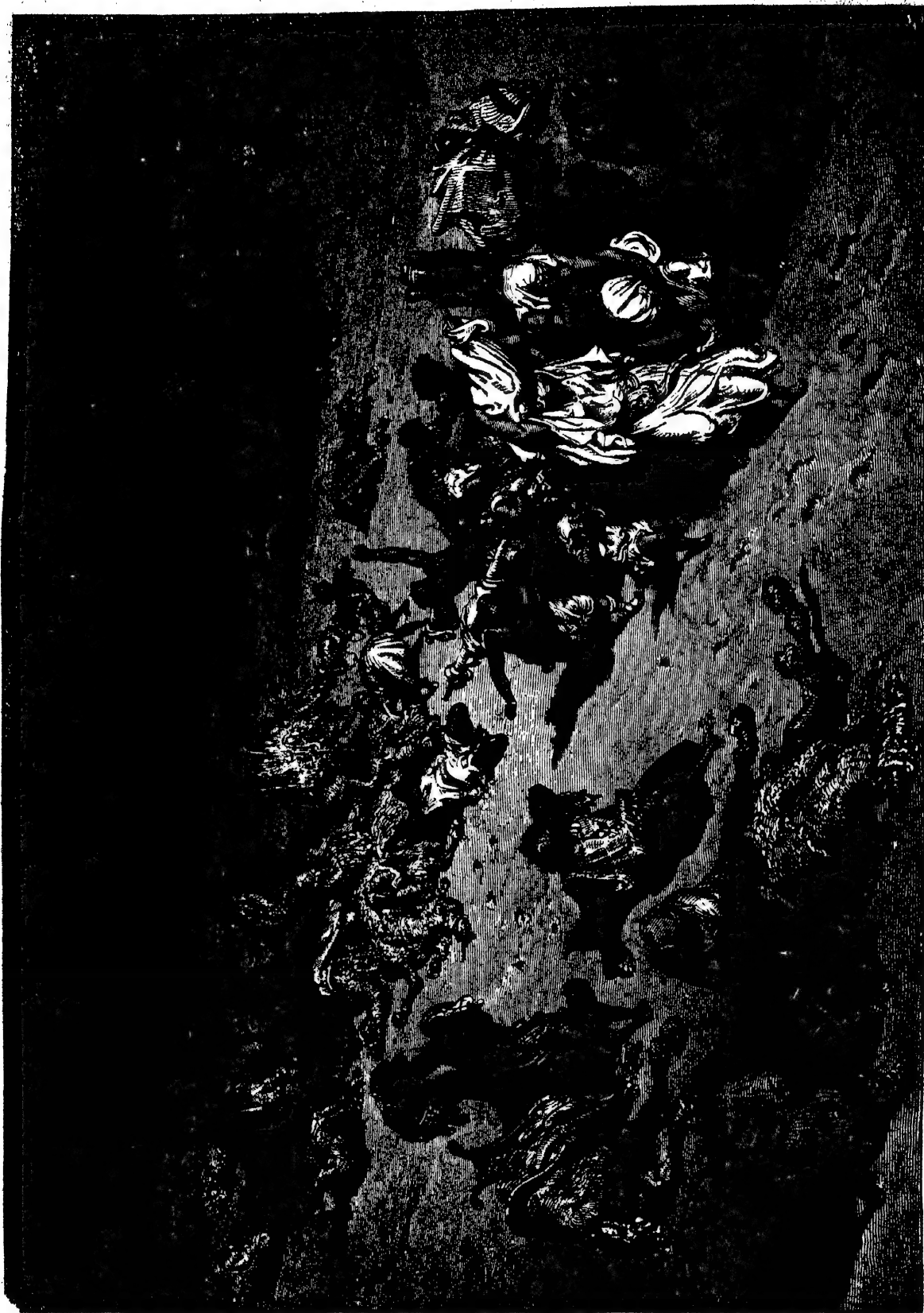
made by God's commands, Aaron threw down his rod before Pharaoh, when instantly it became a live serpent. But this miracle did not convince the king, for, calling his magicians before Moses, they too cast down their rods and changed them into serpents, but Aaron's rod swallowed up the magicians' rods. On the following day, as Pharaoh came down to the river, Moses went before him, and striking the water with his rod turned it into blood; and when the Egyptians dug for wells they could find nothing but blood, and there was no water to drink for a period of seven days. This plague of blood was so great that Pharaoh softened his heart and promised to let the Israelites go if Moses would bring back the waters as before. But when Moses, by prayer to God, restored the waters, Pharaoh broke his promise, so that other plagues were sent upon Egypt, each time the king declaring, while the plague was upon the land, that if it were removed he would liberate the people, but as often refusing to redeem his pledge.

The plagues that were thus sent by God were as follows: First, a plague of blood, then of frogs, next of lice, flies, murrain, by which all the domestic animals died, then boils on both man and beast, then hail and fire, next grasshoppers, then darkness, and last, but most terrible of all, was the plague of the first-born, by which the eldest child of every Egyptian family was brought to death.

When God determined to visit the Egyptians with this last dreadful punishment, He first directed Moses and Aaron to tell the Israelites and to order each Hebrew family to take a lamb from their flocks, which should be kept for a period of four days, at the end of which time it was to be killed, in the evening; into the blood of the lamb a hyssop branch was to be dipped, which should then be struck on each side and over every door of the Israelites' houses, so that there might be three marks of blood at the door of those who were to escape the visit of death. It was also commanded that the lambs thus slain should be roasted and eaten while the Israelites were all ready to depart out of Egypt, their dress complete and weapons in their hands.

While the Hebrews were thus prepared, and were eating the lambs as God directed, the angel of death came through all the land of Egypt, smiting the first-born of every Egyptian house, but passing by, or over, every house that had the blood marks. It is this incident which the Jews still celebrate in their Feast of the Passover.

None of the plagues which God had sent to worry the Egyptians were permitted to visit any of the Israelites, but still Pharaoh was so wicked in his heart, and had so long bowed down to idols, that with all the manifestations of God's will and power, he refused to give the Israelites their freedom. When, therefore, the plague of the first-born was sent, God ordered His chosen people to gather together themselves and their flocks, and to borrow, or take from the Egyptians all the gold and silver and jewels which they could obtain, and depart out of Egypt. The number which started in obedience to this com-^{mand} were



THE PLAGUE OF MURRAIN.

"Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon the cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain."—Ex. ix. 3.

was six hundred thousand men, besides children; and herds of animals, such as goats, cattle, camels and asses, but without other provisions, as the haste with which they left prevented them from taking any victuals except some unleavened bread.

So great was the number of Israelites that they had gone some days before Pharaoh could assemble an army large enough to go in pursuit. We are not told how many soldiers Pharaoh collected, but it must have been a great host, for "he took six hundred chosen chariots and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them."

PHARAOH'S HOST DROWNED IN THE RED SEA.

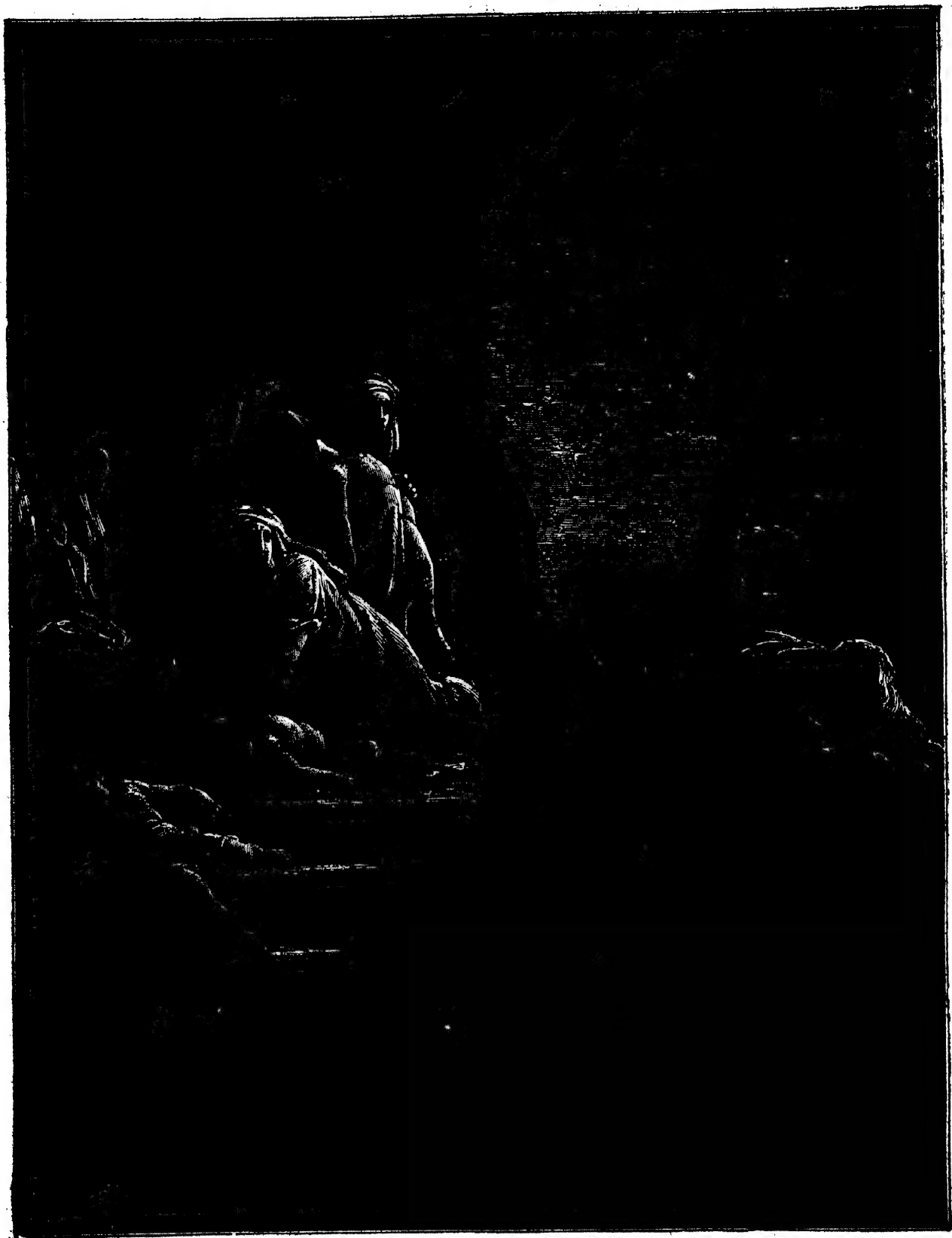
The Israelites did not flee with any well-determined idea as to where they were going, being concerned only for their freedom, and relying upon the Lord's



PHARAOH'S HOST SWALLOWED UP.

"And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea."—Ex. xiv. 27.

promise to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey. The desert which lay between Egypt and Canaan (Palestine), being the north portion of Arabia, was called "the wilderness," through which their route lay. As there were no roads through this dreary country, lest they might become lost, God sent before them a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, which they were bidden to follow.



DEATH OF PHARAOH'S FIRST-BORN.

"And there was a great cry in Egypt: for there was not a house where there was not one dead."—Ex. xii. 30.

When the Israelites were several days march from the capital of Egypt, God commanded them to make a camp at Pihahiroth, which was beside the north-most end of the Red Sea. Here, in the midst of the confusion of their camp, they discovered the rapidly approaching army of Pharaoh, and became panic-stricken. Believing that they should now be massacred, a great number of Israelites began to find fault with Moses, "for," said they, "it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." Moses replied to their murmurings by bidding them to fear not and that they should see the salvation of the Lord, for he would fight for them.

When Moses had prayed to God he was bidden to stretch forth his rod and divide the waters of the Red Sea, and to order his people to move forward. After he had followed the Divine direction the waters of the sea were divided so that a great wall stood on either side and left a dry path between. Into this miraculous pathway the Israelites marched, followed directly by the pursuing Egyptians, but the latter had not proceeded far when the great walls of water were broken and came rushing together upon Pharaoh's hosts with such violence that they were overwhelmed and every one of that immense army was drowned. But the Israelites marched out on the other side on dry ground, nor was one of them destroyed, for the waters did not come together until they had all passed out on the Arabian side.

WANDERINGS OF THE ISRAELITES.

When the Israelites were safe from their enemies they sang praises to the Lord with hearty thanksgiving, and then continued their march. The land of Canaan lay northeast of Egypt, but the route taken by them was a circuitous one, since it led southeasterly through Arabia, and thus caused them to travel many hundreds of miles farther, and through a very much more miserable country, than if they had skirted the Mediterranean Sea, and gone by the direct and easiest way. But there were two reasons why God chose that they should be led by the longer and more difficult route. *First*.—If they had gone by the shore of the Mediterranean their march would have been interrupted by the warlike Philistines, who dwelt in the southern part of Canaan, by whom they would doubtless have been exterminated, without some miraculous interposition. *Second*.—The Lord chose to chasten his people and impress upon them His loving care and providence, by which they should come to serve Him loyally—a most excellent reason, as we shall hereafter see.

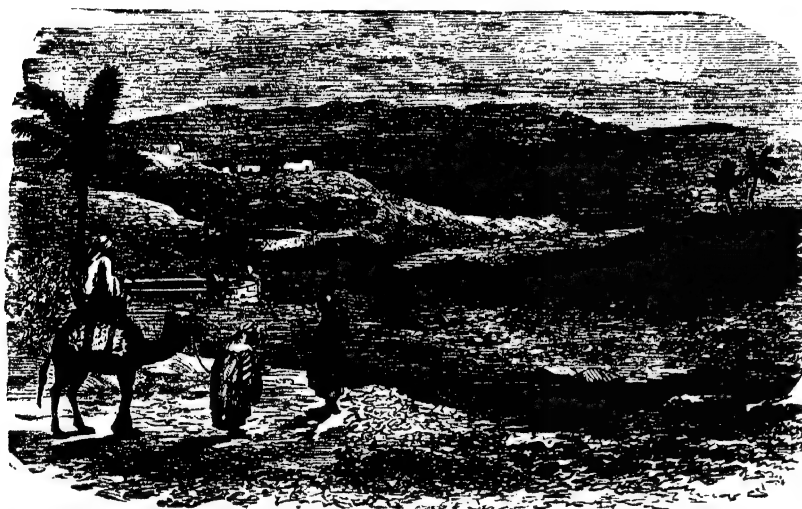
The Israelites, after crossing the Red Sea, marched southwardly along the Gulf of Suez, until they reached the seventeen wells of Moses, at the station of *Ayun Musa*. From this point they diverged southwestwardly through the margin of the desert of Paran, and the wilderness of Shur, which is still noted for its great sand storms and aridity. For three days they were in this wilderness without water, and when, at last, being tormented by thirst, they came to the spring of Marah, they could not drink the water

because of its bitterness. Again the Israelites complained loudly against Moses for bringing them into such a land, wherein they were threatened with death by thirst, forgetting already how God had delivered them in their extremities.

The Lord now directed Moses to take the branches of a certain tree, which grew by the spring, and cast them into the spring, which being done the waters were at once made sweet and wholesome, so that the Israelites and their herds gratified their thirst.

FED WITH MANNA FROM HEAVEN.

After quenching their thirst at Marah the Hebrews continued their march until they came to what was called the wilderness of Sin, which was not far from the Red Sea, or between its waters and Mount Sinai. Here they were



THE POOL OR WELLS OF MOSES.

put to another great trial, for the unleavened bread which they had brought away from Egypt was now exhausted, and starvation was threatening. As they had already done three times before, when suffering under the chastening rod, they again accused Moses of leading them into a strange land which had made their hardships greater than those which they bore while under bondage.

The Lord now told Moses and Aaron that he would again show to the Israelites that he was leading them, by causing bread to fall from heaven wherewith to satisfy their hunger, and that He would so continue to supply them until they should come into Canaan. According to this promise every night thereafter manna was sent from heaven, which the people gathered early in the morning so that the supply was never deficient. But besides this miraculous provision, that the people should not be fed by bread alone, in the evening a great number of quails flew into their camp, which were caught and served to supply them with meat.

WATER BROUGHT OUT OF THE ROCK IN HOREB.

The many manifestations of God's watchful care which the Israelites had seen still did not incline them to a belief in the promises Moses had made to them; for with every fresh trouble they were ready to expend their wrath

upon the leader whom God had appointed to take them from a land of bondage to a country blessed with an abundance for all their temporal needs.

After the Israelites had passed through the desert of Sin they came to a place called Rephidim, meaning *resting place*. Again were they afflicted with the scarcity of water, and again did they raise a cry against Moses, which at length grew into threats against his life. Moses appealed to the Lord, by whom he was directed to take some of the elders and go on before the people until he should reach the rock in Horeb; this rock he was directed to strike with his rod, promising that a plentiful supply of water should follow the act. Moses did as the Lord bade him, and a stream of water gushed out of the rock sufficient for all the people and their herds; but scarcely had the danger of thirst been overcome, when a king called Amalek, a leader of some warlike tribes who were descendants of Esau, attacked them with no other purpose than to rob them of their possessions.

This first battle of the Israelites was a severe one and was waged for some time with varying success, for we are told that, though Joshua was the leader of the Israelitish host, when Moses lifted his hands his people prevailed, but when he let them fall the Amalekites prevailed. The battle so continued until Moses sat upon a stone and his hands were held up by Aaron on one side and Hur on the other, when the Israelites put to flight the Amalekites with great slaughter.

MOSES MEETS HIS WIFE AND FATHER-IN-LAW.

After this great battle Jethro, the Midian priest, Moses' father-in-law, heard of the events befalling the Israelites; and taking Zipporah, Moses' wife, and the two sons born to him, he went out to meet his kinsman. When they met, Moses fell on Jethro's neck and kissed him, and then told of all the wonderful things which had befallen him since his departure from Egypt. Jethro seems to have been a very devout man, for he served the true God, and when he learned how Moses was an instrument in the Lord's hands for bringing the Israelites out of bondage, he took a burnt-offering and made sacrifices to God.

On the following day all the Israelites were called together before Moses to receive such judgments as they might ask to have made, as Moses was the only judge which they had, and upon him therefore devolved the entire administration of justice. Jethro, seeing this, told Moses that the duty was too much for one man to perform, and thereupon advised that councillors and judges be appointed from among the people who should sit in judgment somewhat after the manner of our present courts. Moses was to be the supreme judge, whilst others should try the lesser offenses or causes, corresponding with our circuit judges and magistrates. This would relieve Moses of all other duties save the hearing of the highest complaints. These suggestions were so well received that Moses at once acted upon them and appointed rulers, or judges,

over thousands, and over hundreds, and fifties, and of tens. After this Jethro departed, and there is no further record concerning him.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS GIVEN TO MOSES.

In the third month after the Israelites had gone out of Egypt they came into the wilderness of Sinai, and when they had encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai Moses went up on to the peak and there talked with God. In this conversation the Lord reminded him of how He had sustained him and his people, and that greater things were yet in store for him if he would obey His voice. Then God further told Moses to go down among the Israelites and sanctify them, and to order them to wash their clothes and be ready on the third day thereafter to receive Him. God charged Moses particularly, however, not to permit any one to go up to the mount, for death would be surely visited upon those who should attempt to do so.

When morning dawned on the third day there was a deep cloud seen resting on Sinai, out of which came flashes of blinding lightning and crashing peals of thunder, so that all the people in the camp trembled with great fear. Moses now ordered all the Israelites to come out of their tents and to stand at the foot of the mountain; as they obeyed the command the Lord descended upon the mount in fire and made it smoke like an immense furnace, while thunder continued to break in terrific discharges. Then a trumpet was heard blaring in deep resonance, and growing louder and louder until Moses spoke, when the Lord called to him to come up on the mountain. When Moses came up God charged him to go down again and forbid the people, the priests or the elders from venturing upon the side of the mount, lest they become victims to His wrath, but to come up again and bring with him Aaron.

After Moses did what had been commanded, he received and communicated to the people the law which God had promulgated, the ten commandments which He afterward again gave to Moses on the same mountain written on tables of stone. When Moses returned to God he stood in the thick darkness which clothed the Omnipotent, while the people looked on from a distance, fearful of the thunders and black clouds from out which God's voice was sent. Here Moses received the Divine precepts, which related to the government and future of the Jewish people. God, thus through Moses, assured the Israelites of His protection if they would but obey Him, but warned them of His vengeance should they embrace idolatry. Above all, He told them that the angel Jehovah (the Christ), who had guided them out of Egypt, would still lead them to the land of promise and fight their battles.

Moses returned to Mount Sinai several times, being the messenger between God and the Israelites, but on the last visit he remained for a period of forty days and nights, fasting all the while, during which time he was commanded to make a sanctuary from the gold, silver, fine linens, shittim wood and skins that the people should contribute. He also told Moses that this sanctuary

should have an altar, or mercy-seat, of pure gold, with two cherubim of gold that should be placed on either side facing each other, and with wings extended. The mercy-seat was to rest upon an ark, at which God promised to meet and commune with Moses concerning the government of his people and of holy things. He also commanded that a Tabernacle be built of ten curtains of fine twisted linen, of blue, purple and scarlet, and within this Tabernacle should the ark be kept. There was also to be provided a table for shewbread. This bread was to be baked by the priests, appointed for a week, and placed on the golden table in the sanctuary. There were to be twelve loaves, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, which were to be changed every Sabbath, and be eaten only by the priests in the holy place. The Lord also told Moses to provide an altar for sacrifices, and also a candelabra, or golden candlestick, of seven branches, and a lamp which should be kept supplied with olive oil.



MIRIAM'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING.

"The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea."—EX. xv. 21.

every Sabbath, and be eaten only by the priests in the holy place. The Lord also told Moses to provide an altar for sacrifices, and also a candelabra, or golden candlestick, of seven branches, and a lamp which should be kept supplied with olive oil.

Besides the instructions which God gave to Moses as to how the Tabernacle of the congregation should be built, and the holy furniture with which it should be provided, He also told Moses to establish a priesthood by investing Aaron and his four sons with the vestments of the holy office, describing to His servant what the insignia of the priestly office should be, and how Aaron and his sons were to be consecrated. While the priestly garments were ordered to be made out of the most costly linens, bejewelled with many precious stones, such as topaz, carbuncle, diamond, sardius, emerald, sapphire, ligure, agate, amethyst, beryl, onyx and jasper, set in "ouches of gold in their inclosing," it is somewhat surprising that the ceremony of investiture was made so simple. The command



WORSHIPPING THE GOLDEN CALF.

given was that, "thou (Moses) shalt bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation and wash them, and thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments and anoint him, that he may minister to Me in the priest's office." Thus it appears that the only ceremony was the pouring of oil upon the head, as an act of sanctification, and the putting on of the priestly garments. Though the office was conferred by a simple act, this fact did not detract any from the solemn obligations imposed, since the surroundings were sufficiently grave and holy to thoroughly impress upon the inducted priests its sacredness, while the people needed no other evidence of authority thus bestowed by God than the holy light that shone always about the Tabernacle.

THE ISRAELITES BECOME IDOLATERS.

Moses was so long upon Sinai talking with God that at the end of forty days, upon returning to the people, he found that Aaron had made for them an idol out of the gold and jewelry which they had brought to him, and moulded it into a golden calf. Before this image the people were bowing in adoration, and had, by direction of Aaron, made a great feast and offered burnt-offerings and sacrifices to it.

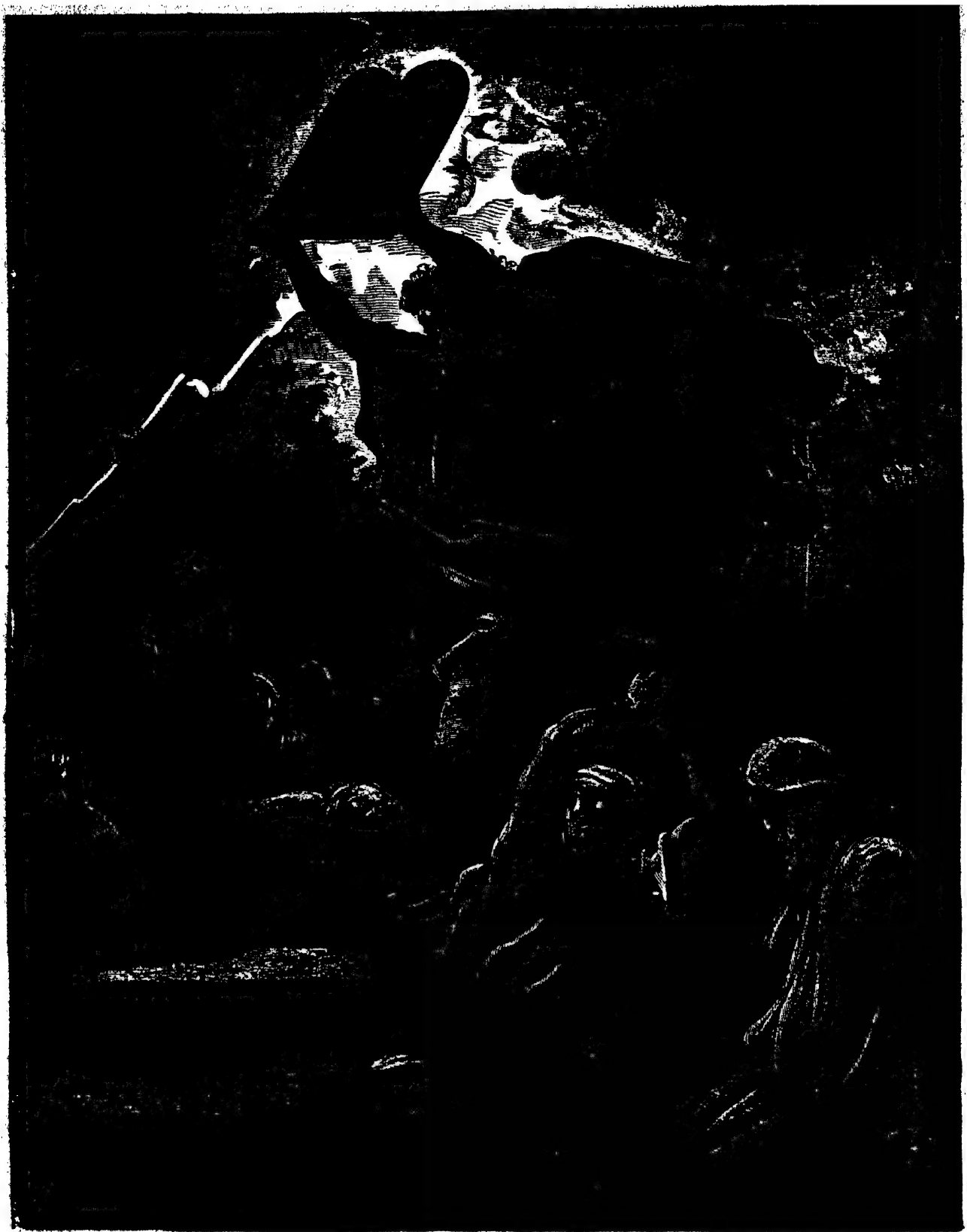
God was so angered at the Israelites for their idolatry, and so speedily turning away from Him after beholding so many of His mercies, that He re-



MOUNT SINAI.

solved to "consume them from the face of the earth." But Moses pleaded so earnestly for their lives that God consented to spare them, but not without some punishment which should be visited upon them in the future.

When Moses came back to his people he brought with him the tables of stone graven with the ten commandments, but as he drew near he beheld the Israelites making merry before the golden calf, which so offended him that he threw down the tables and broke them. Then he called to Aaron and asked why the the people had abandoned God and become worshippers of the golden image? Aaron made reply that the people had come to him and begged him to make



(110)

MOSES BREAKING THE TABLES.

"And Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands."—Ex. xxxii.

THE BEAUTIFUL STORY.

them a god, since they knew not what had become of Moses; but he pleaded with his brother not to be angry with them. Moses now went and stood at the "gate of the camp," and called aloud, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come to me." To this cry all the sons of Levi responded, and were told by Moses that God had ordered them to "go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." The children of Levi obeyed the command, and killed that day three thousand of the offending Israelites.

After inflicting this punishment Moses took the Tabernacle, which had been prepared as the Lord had directed, and set it up some distance from the camp, and when all had been made ready he entered into the veil beside the mercy-seat. God then appeared to him in a cloudy pillar, which stood at the Tabernacle door, and talked with him, "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend," while all the people looked on in wonder and praise. Here God confirmed all that He had before promised and told Moses He would show him His mercy and glory. Moses was thereupon ordered to prepare other tables and go again to the top of Mount Sinai, where God would write upon these stones the commandments in place of the tables that were broken.

Moses did as the Lord willed, and remained on the mount fasting for another period of forty days and nights, talking with God, who gave him the new tables, and promised that if the people would cease their iniquities He would do greater things for them than ever before. Moses then returned to the Israelites, bearing the tables, and told them of God's promises, and while he spoke to them his face shone brightly, so that they were afraid to come near him.



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CHAPTER VIII.

STONING A BLASPHEMER.

Leviticus.



MOSES gave the law of the statutes, which God had made, to the people and established the days of thanksgivings and praise-offerings, and also the tithe rate which was to be given for the maintenance of the priesthood. After this the people became very devout, seeing again how merciful the Lord had been to them, but withal there were yet some who disregarded the will of God and continued in their transgressions. The first instance of a relapse into sin after Moses' last return from Sinai, is described in the Bible as follows:

Among the host of Israelites who came out of Egypt there was one Egyptian, or, rather, the son of an Egyptian by an Israelite woman. The mixing of blood between the master and slave was common during the Israelitish bondage, but in all cases such offspring were held in slavery. On a certain occasion, this half-caste fell into a dispute with one of the Israelites, and the two fought in the camp, during which contest the former blasphemed the name of the Lord. This event must have occurred soon after the last appearance, or manifestation, of God before Moses and the people, and while the spirit of righteousness was upon them, else they would hardly have regarded the offense so gravely, as the entire camp was of a short time previously grovelling before the molten calf.

But now the blasphemer was arrested and thrown into a ward, until he could be brought to trial. When the matter was referred to God, he counselled with God, who directed that the offender be taken out of camp and there stoned by all those who heard the words of blasphemy uttered. This wrath of God, against those who took His name in vain, was thereafter formulated into a law, making the utterance of oaths profane with death by stoning.

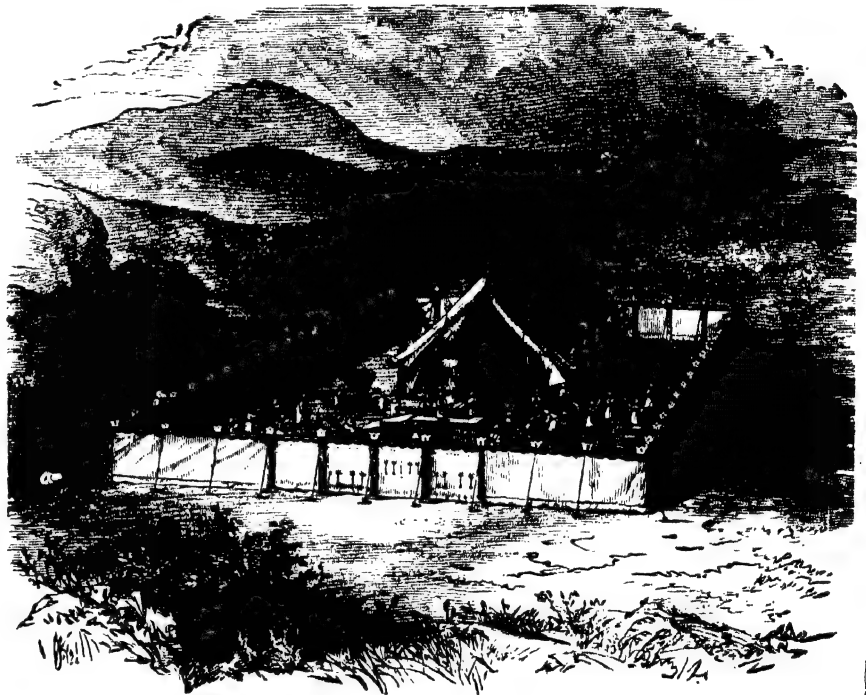
TAKING A CENSUS OF THE ISRAELITES.

Two years after the children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt God ordered Moses to take a census of all the men in the camp

years old and upwards, who were capable of taking up arms and doing battle. The date fixed by Bible students when this numbering of the people took place was in May, 1490 B. C.

The result of the census showed that over six hundred thousand men were in the camp subject to military duty, besides those of the tribe of Levi, who numbered eight thousand five hundred and eighty, who were exempt from all other duties than that of service in the sanctuary, from which it would appear that the two years of journeying in the wilderness of Sinai had not diminished the number that set out with Moses, but on the other hand showed a perceptible increase.

After the census was completed by Aaron, to whom the work had been assigned by Moses, as the Lord commanded, "Moses divided among the families of the Levites the charge of the Tabernacle of the congregation and of the holy things," and these he specially charged, by the Lord's directions, as follows: "He shall separate himself from wine and strong drinks, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried." This was God's first injunction

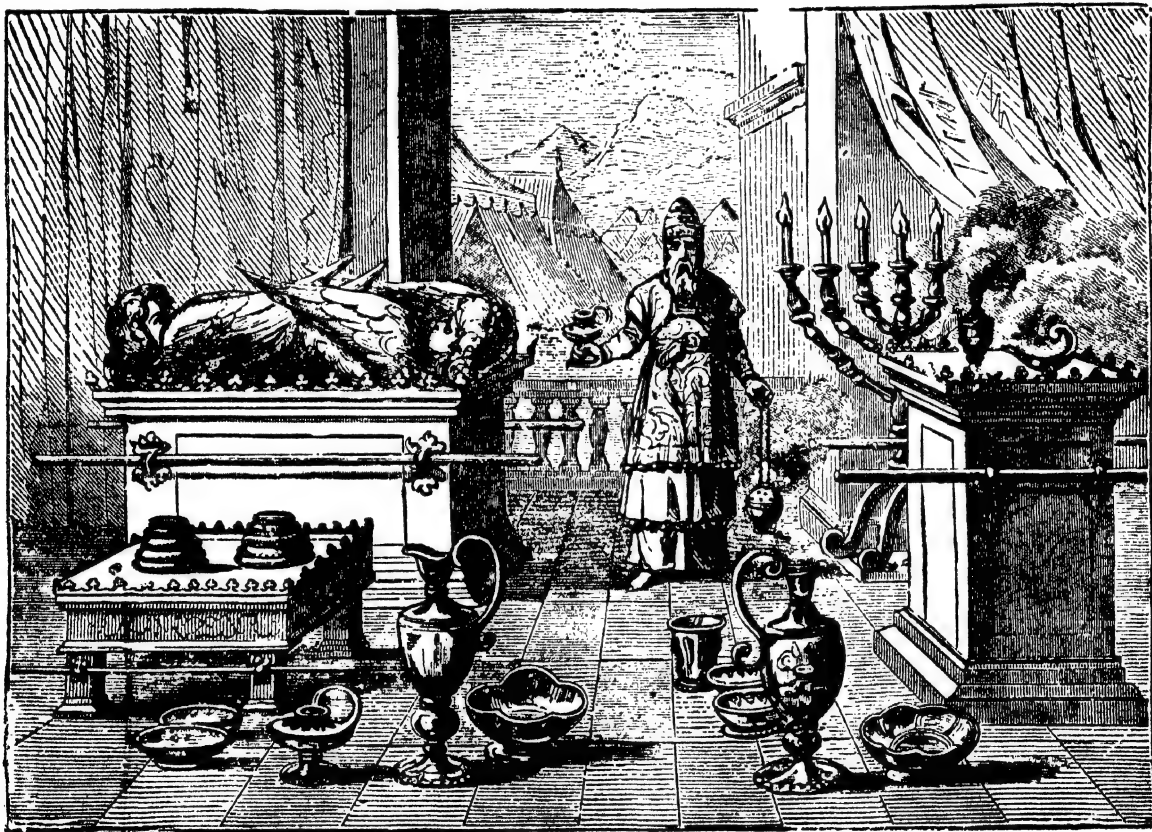


THE TABERNACLE.

against the use of strong drink, but in this case He forbade the use of it by the priests, lest in their drunkenness they might profane or defile the holy things of the sanctuary, which offense the Lord promised He would punish by death. But notwithstanding this command, it was not long after the Tabernacle was dedicated that Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, went into the holy sanctuary drunk with wine, and there offered "strange fire" on the altar of incense. This so offended God that he sent a fire which consumed them. It is probable, and it appears so from the reading, that this punishment was inflicted upon Aaron's two sons before God had given His law to the priests against drunkenness, and that their offense prompted the establishing of such a law.

THE ISRAELITES RESUME THEIR JOURNEYINGS.

It was very soon, perhaps within a few days, after the numbering of the people by Aaron, that Jehovah told Moses to break camp and resume his journey toward the Mount of the Amorites, which was in the southern part of modern Palestine. During the continuance of the Tabernacle in the plain where it was first set up, the Lord hovered upon it in a cloud, but now this cloud was lifted, as the sign for the Israelites to depart from Sinai; the Tabernacle was taken down, the herds gathered together, and everything being made ready, two silver trumpets were blown as a signal, and the march was taken up again toward the land of promise. God now appeared to the wander-



PRIEST AND FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE.

ing host in the form of a cloud which went before them into the wilderness of Paran, a three days' journey, where it stopped to indicate that they should there encamp again for a short rest. While travelling, the Levites, to whom were given the priestly offices, carried all the paraphernalia of the Tabernacle, and these went before the Israelites, so that when the time for halting arrived they might fix upon a place to set it up, for in the Tabernacle was the Divine favor made manifest, as previously explained.

While in the desert of Paran, which was an arid waste, difficult to travel through, troubles again began to assail the Israelites, which they, as usual,

attributed to Moses, accusing him of bringing them out of a land of plenty that they might starve in the wilderness. Manna continued to fall from heaven, which supplied them with bread, but of meat there was none, and for the want of this their murmurings were very loud. This greatly discouraged Moses, for he had done all within his power to preserve and lead aright his people, and in his distress he called to the Lord and asked why so much trouble had been sent upon him, and begged that he might die rather than continue to bear the burden of the Israelites' complaints.

God, though somewhat offended at Moses for desiring to evade the duties and responsibilities that had been placed upon him for a wise purpose, nevertheless heard his complaint with compassion, for He told Moses to select seventy men of the elders of Israel and to bring them to the Tabernacle; which being done, upon these seventy God divided the responsibilities, so that they were assigned to such duties as made them answerable to the people in the same manner as Moses.

The Lord now promised Moses that He would also feed the Israelites with meat for a whole month, although their fault-finding and rebellious spirit should not be left unpunished. Moses seems to have doubted God's power to provide food for such a vast multitude, for he asks, "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them?"

By the will of Omnipotence an east wind was now made to spring up, which brought such a vast number of quails that they fell on the ground over a space of thirty miles in diameter, and in places more than two feet in depth. Upon this innumerable legion of birds the Israelites began to feed themselves, but scarcely had they placed the food within their mouths when a plague fell upon the people, as a punishment for their sins, of which many thousands died. To this day enormous flocks of birds pass at regular intervals over this region, so great at times as to obscure the sun, and render the statement of Moses readily credible, even aside of any miracle such as God here performed.

SPIES SENT INTO CANAAN.

The length of time that the Israelites tarried at the camp pitched in Paran is not indicated in the Bible narrative, but it could hardly have been more than a few days, judging by the events which followed. We are told that they arrived at Kadesh, which was by the mountain of the Amorites, in the southern part of Palestine, forty days before the vintage, probably in the early part of June.

When the Israelites had gone into encampment at Kadesh, the Lord ordered Moses to send twelve spies, one from each tribe, into the land of Canaan, who should learn the number of people that dwelt in the country, what was their fighting strength, the manner of their living, whether in tents or walled cities, whether they were rich or poor, and whether the land was wooded or prairie.

In obedience to this command Moses chose one from each of the twelve tribes of Israel and sent them to make a trip through Palestine, from the point

of encampment to near the northern extremity. The spies accordingly set forth under the guidance and protection of God, and journeyed for a period of forty days, when they returned to Moses and made their report. Two of the spies, named Caleb and Joshua, came upon a vineyard, by the brook Eshcol, from which they cut a single cluster of grapes so large that it required their combined strength to carry it, slung upon a pole, back to the camp. The reports which the twelve spies made differed so materially that the effects were most momentous to all the Israelites. While they all declared with one voice that the land was indeed flowing with milk and honey, some of them persisted that the cities in which the people dwelt,—the Anakites, Amalekites, Hittites,

Jebusites, Amorites and Canaanites,—were surrounded by high and impregnable walls, while the Anakites were such mighty giants, and of such exceeding valor, that the Israelites were but as grasshoppers in comparison. Caleb and Joshua, the two who had brought back the grapes, denied the reports of their comrades, and sought to induce the Israelites to go at once and take possession of the fair land, with



RETURN OF THE SPIES.

its immense wealth of fruits and treasure, and which they stoutly maintained they had the strength to do.

This contradiction and dispute among the spies led to a tumult among the people who, being prone to fear under the least provocation, threatened to stone Caleb and Joshua, and when they found Moses and Aaron also disposed to go into the strange land, the Israelites rose in rebellion and sought a captain who would lead them back to Egypt.

Moses and Aaron both fell on their faces, and in anguish implored the people not to provoke the anger of God, but their supplications, as well as the assurances of Caleb and Joshua, only served to provoke them the more, for now they gathered up stones to kill the four, when suddenly the glory of God

blazed from about the Tabernacle and the people were awed, so that they withheld themselves from committing murder.

FORTY YEARS' WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS.

God was again so angered by the perversity and extreme sinfulness of the Israelites in refusing to believe in Him after all the signs and miracles which He had performed for their salvation, that He now resolved to destroy them by a pestilence; but He promised to preserve Moses, and make his descendants a greater nation than that of which he was now the leader. But Moses interceded with the Lord in his people's behalf and begged that their lives be spared, saying: "Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, and as Thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt until now."

God at length consented to spare the lives of the Israelites, but He would punish them by compelling them to wander in the wilderness for a period of forty years, until all those above twenty years of age who had heard His voice and seen His miracles should die; so that none of them might come into the land which was promised, though their children should receive the inheritance and possess Canaan. Caleb, Joshua, Moses, Aaron, and perhaps others among the priesthood were exempted from this punishment, for though they too were doomed to wander with their people, they were suffered at last to behold the land which God had promised to give the Israelites; but the ten spies who had so excited the fears of the people were stricken with a plague and died.

When the Israelites had heard this sentence they became greatly distressed, but sought to force their way into the land of Canaan nevertheless, and insisted on showing their courage by an immediate attack upon the possessors. Moses again told them not to proceed thus against the Lord's will, since God would not protect them, and if they went they would certainly be attacked by the Amalekites and Canaanites. Notwithstanding this advice, and the refusal of Moses to allow the ark to be taken with them, early in the morning nearly all in the camp went up the mountain, where they were met by the Amalekites and Canaanites, by whom they were defeated, and chased in their flight as far as Hormah, several miles distant.

REBELLION OF THE PRINCES.

The Bible does not tell us much concerning the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, thirty-seven years of which period is a blank, no mention being made of a single incident that transpired during this time. The first three years of the Israelites in the wilderness are described in the Chronicles, after which nothing more is written until far toward the end of their journeyings, as we shall see.

The first incident given after the Israelites were so badly defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites, is concerning a man who was arrested for gather-

THE BEAUTIFUL STORY.

ing sticks, for firewood, on the Sabbath day. This was a very grave offense, since God had given the law to Moses that no work should be performed on the Sabbath. In order to make this law effective it was now resolved to visit the offender with a penalty of such great severity that thereafter its observance would be general and faithful. Accordingly, when the man was brought before Moses he ordered the culprit to be taken outside the camp and there stoned to death, in the same manner as blasphemers.

Soon after this event there was a rebellion against Moses and Aaron, led by Korah, a Levite, and Dathan and Abiram, descendants of Reuben. Korah was in service to the priests, but he aspired at once to the priesthood, while Dathan and Abiram sought to secure the leadership of Israel, basing their claims, probably, upon the fact that they were descended from the eldest son of Jacob, and therefore entitled to superior rights, according to the law of primogeniture. They urged their claims before the people, by declaring that Aaron had taken too much authority and reserved for himself offices which should of right belong to the Levites, while the old cry went up against Moses that he had brought the Israelites out of a land of plenty to bring them into a wilderness which threatened their extermination. These complaints found favor with a great number of the people, so that two hundred and fifty princes, famous in the congregation, espoused their cause, and were upon the point of attempting the overthrow of Moses and Aaron. At this juncture God commanded Korah and the other rebels to present themselves at the door of the Tabernacle, each with his censer, while Moses and Aaron and the people who remained loyal to them were commanded to do the same. When this was done God told Moses and his partisans to separate themselves from the rebels, that He might destroy them, but Moses interceded for them; this intercession, however, did not this time avail, for when the two parties were separated the Lord caused the earth to open and swallow up the rebellious people, while fire came out from the Tabernacle and consumed the two hundred and fifty princes. The brazen censers which they carried were preserved, however, out of which Aaron caused plates to be made for a covering of the altar of burnt-offering.

It appears from the reading that only a part of those who favored the rebellion were destroyed by the earthquake, for we are further on told that a great many of the people gathered before the Tabernacle to revenge the death of their fellow conspirators upon Moses, but the Lord now appeared in a cloud above the Tabernacle and sent a pestilence among the people which destroyed more than fourteen thousand of those who had favored the rebellion. The merciful disposition of Moses was now again strikingly shown by his command to Aaron to fill his censer with coals from the altar as an atonement for the people, and to stand between the living and the dead, by which the plague was stayed. This was a striking symbol of Christ's mediation which should interpose to save those doomed to death by sin.

God now chose to show to the Israelites, by a miracle, that Aaron had been

to discharge the chief duties of the priesthood, that the people accept him without further complaint. The Lord accordingly ordered that twelve rods, or sceptres, be chosen, one for each of the twelve tribes, upon each of which the name of the tribe to which it belonged should be written, the name of Aaron being upon the rod of Levi. These rods were ordered to be laid in the Tabernacle over night. On the following morning, when the rods were taken out of the sacred place, behold that one bearing the name of Aaron was covered with buds and blossoms, and full grown almonds, while all the



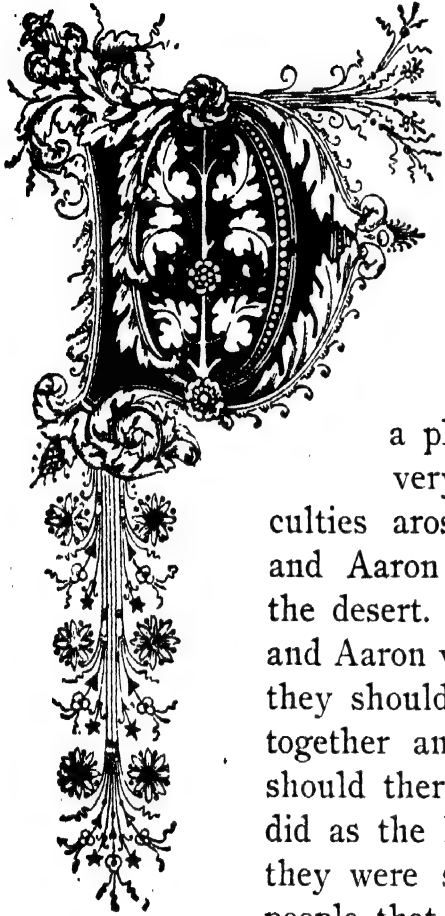
THE ROD OF AARON BUDDED.

others were but dry sticks. This was the sign that Aaron should be the fruitful sceptre of authority, the spiritual, life-giving power out of which should ultimately come the Messiah.

It was a vivid emblem of "the rod of Jesse," the "Branch," springing up without the sustenance of nature, which in the prophets represents the spiritual and life-giving power of the Messiah. By the command of God it was laid up in the ark, for a perpetual memorial against the like rebellions. The people, now terrified into submission, cried that they only drew near the Tabernacle to perish, and Jehovah repeated the law, committing the charge of the sanctuary to the Levites.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SIN OF MOSES AND AARON.



DIRECTLY after the events just recorded had transpired, the Lord raised up the cloud which stood over the Tabernacle as a sign that the Israelites should leave Kadesh and continue their journeyings. As the cloud went before, the people followed (which was about April, 1452 B. C.) through the wilderness of Sin, until they came to a place where there was no water, and the thirst was very great. As was their invariable habit, when difficulties arose, the Israelites began to murmur against Moses and Aaron for having brought them out of Egypt to die in the desert. When these complaints became very loud, Moses and Aaron went to the door of the Tabernacle to ask God what they should do. He commanded them to gather the people together and to take their rods and *speak* to a rock, which should thereupon give out abundant water. Moses and Aaron did as the Lord ordered, in calling the multitude together, but they were so vexed by the complainings and threats of the people that, instead of obeying the implicit instructions which God gave them, they said: "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" and then instead of *speaking* to the rock, Moses *struck* it twice with his rod. The water thereupon gushed out abundantly, so that every one drank his fill; but God was so displeased by the disobedience of Moses and Aaron that He called them to Him at Mount Hor and said that because of their rebellion against His will Aaron should die on Mount Hor, after his priestly garments were first stripped from him and put upon his son Eleazar. Aaron died as the Lord had predicted, and was buried on the mountain, while the entire camp of Israel went into mourning for a period of thirty days.

The punishment which God pronounced against Moses for the sin in which Aaron was a sharer was not enforced until sometime afterward, as we shall see.

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THE BRAZEN SERPENT SET UP.

The wanderings of the Israelites from Mount Hor were by way of the Red Sea, for the purpose of passing around the land of Edom, to escape their enemies, with the hope of being able to enter the country by another route than the one fruitlessly attempted. But they had not gone a great way from Hor, before a new trouble assailed them; whereupon they arose again against Moses and also found fault with God. Said they: "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread (manna)."



AARON'S TOMB.

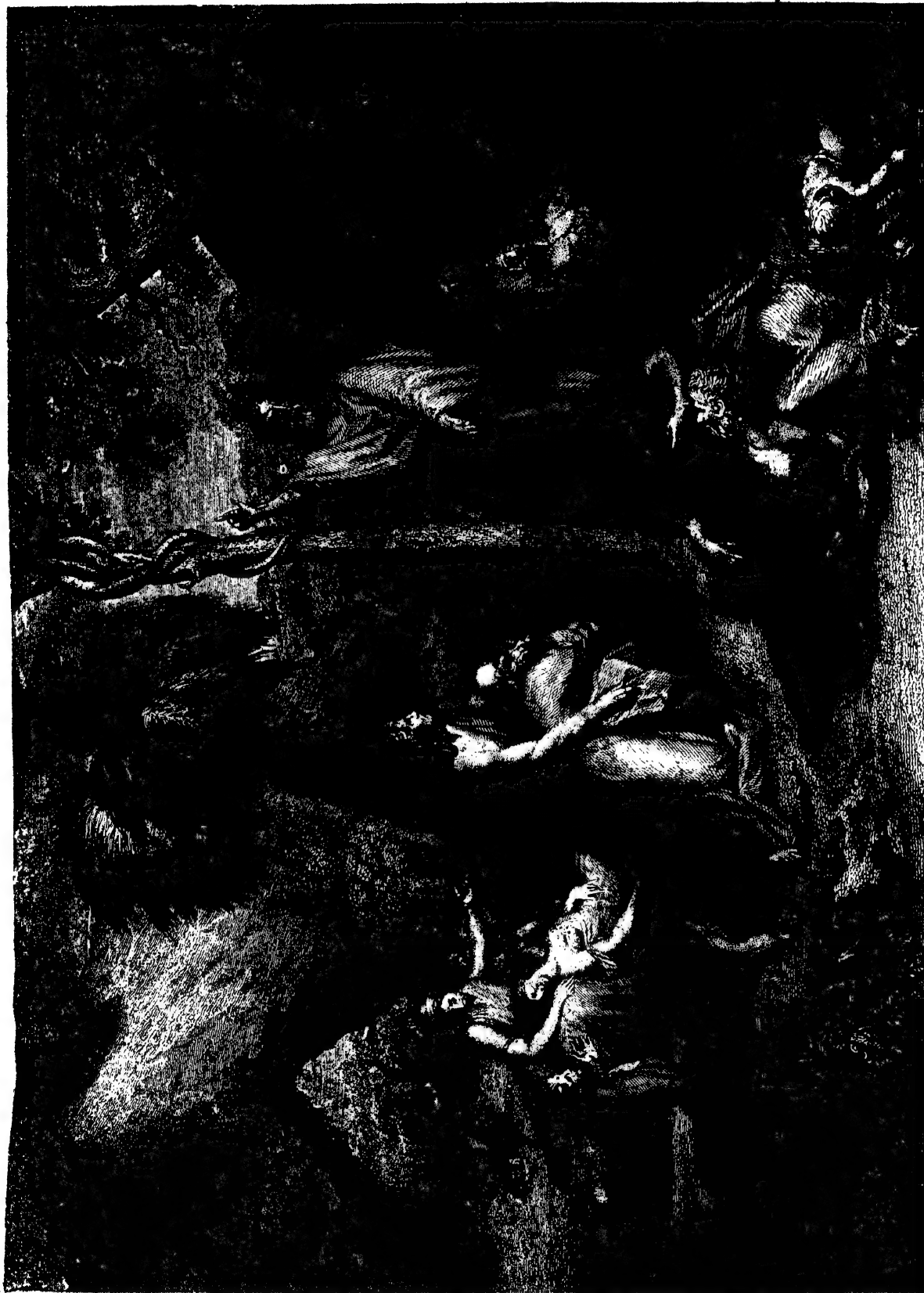
God was so angry at the people for their repeated complaints in the face of the many evidences of His provident care, that He now sent fiery serpents among them, which bit the grumbling Israelites so that a great number died. In this plague of serpents the people observed God's just wrath, and now realizing their sinfulness they begged of Moses that he would pray to the Lord to take away the serpents and thus save them. Always merciful, Moses petitioned God in earnest prayer to save the people who had acknowledged their sin, and in

answer thereto the Lord told him to make a serpent of brass and to place it upon a high pole in the centre of the camp, and that this should destroy the plague, for every one that was thereafter bitten, who should look upon the brazen serpent, should live.

THE ISRAELITES ARE VICTORIOUS IN TWO BATTLES.

When the Israelites came near to the country of the Amorites Moses sent messengers to the king, whose name was Sihon, asking permission to pass peaceably through his territory, promising to do no harm on the route, by going into any of the fields or vineyards, or even to take any water from the wells, but that he would pass through only by the regular roads. This humble request was not only refused, but Sihon collected his army hastily together and attacked the Israelites, without the least justification, at a place named Heshbon. But he paid dearly for his greed and obstinacy, for his army was badly beaten, so that the Israelites took possession, by the right of conquest, of the whole country, including all the cities and villages. Here they dwelt for some time, enjoying everything that the land afforded, until called to resume their wanderings.

After leaving the land of the Amorites, Moses led his people toward the land of Bashan, which was ruled by a giant-king called Og. This king, whose



THE BRAZEN SERPENT LIFTED UP.

"And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole."—NUM. xxi. 9.

bed was thirteen feet long, was as fierce and unjust as Sihon, for he, too, went out at the head of his large army and attacked the Israelites at Edrei, where a great battle was fought. The Lord again favored his chosen people, so that Og and his army were completely annihilated, not a single one escaping.

THE STORY OF BALAAM AND THE ANGEL.

The period appointed for the wanderings of the Israelites was now drawing toward a close, and their journeyings were near to the land which had been promised them. After destroying the giant Og they were masters of the entire region east of the Jordan River, and an extent of territory reaching several hundred miles north and south, while the neighboring kings were in the greatest alarm of an invasion by the victorious hosts of Israel. Therefore, when the Israelites pitched their tents on the arid plains of Moab, the king of the Moabites sought the Midian chiefs, with whom he made an alliance to resist the people of God and Moses.

When the Israelites went into camp in the plains of Moab they were in sight of the fair land of Jericho, which lay near beyond the Jordan; but while waiting for the command to go forward and possess this fruitful heritage, the combined forces of Balak, king of the Moabites, and the Midian chiefs appeared in vast numbers on the hills of Abarim, from whence a view of the camp of Israel was plainly had.

Balak, though at the head of a powerful army, was not disposed to hazard an engagement until he could send messengers to the greatest prophet in the land, Balaam, who lived at Pethor, in Mesopotamia, and bring him to the Moabitish camps to curse Israel. So great was the faith in this prophet, who was generally a godly man, that Balak believed if he could induce Balaam to deliver a curse against Israel that victory would be certain.

In due time the messengers sent by Balak arrived at Balaam's house, and acquainted him with their king's wishes, telling him also that if he would come and curse Israel Balak would bestow upon him great riches. Balaam was a very covetous man, withal he had found such favor in the eyes of God that he had been permitted to prophesy truthfully, so that his fame had spread greatly abroad. But instead of returning an immediate reply to Balak, he requested the messengers to tarry with him until morning, until he could consult the Lord. From what had already transpired Balaam knew that the Israelites were God's chosen people, and he should therefore have sent the messengers away at once, but his love of riches so sorely tempted him that he would fain seek an excuse for doing what Balak had requested.

During the night God appeared to Balaam and asked him concerning the messengers that were in the house, but the reply being evasive, the Lord commanded, "Thou shalt not go with them, nor curse that people, for they are blessed." Accordingly Balaam sent the messengers away in the morning; but when they had returned to Balak with their unfavorable report, the king sent

more honorable envoys to Balaam, with promises of still greater rewards if he would come and curse Israel. Again Balaam neglected to send the messengers away, and thus tempting God he was permitted to follow his inclination to go to the Moabitish camp, but it was with the divine injunction that he was only to speak such words as God should put into his mouth.



BALAAM CONFRONTED BY AN ANGEL.

"Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way."—NUM. xxii. 31.

that was in his heart blinded his spiritual vision, so that he could not see the angel, but the Lord had quickened the sight of the ass, which being frightened turned

away, and thus tempting God he was permitted to follow his inclination to go to the Moabitish camp, but it was with the divine injunction that he was only to speak such words as God should put into his mouth.

The Lord saw how anxious Balaam was to earn the riches which Balak had promised, and determined that the sinfully inclined prophet should have one more warning. He departed in the morning, with the princely messengers who had been sent to him, riding upon a she-ass, but had not proceeded far when an angel appeared in the way with a drawn sword.

The iniquity

THE BEAUTIFUL STORY.

out of the road into a field. Balaam struck his animal sharply and turned her back into the road again, but for a second time the angel stood in the way of a narrow passage between two walls. The ass again shied so that Balaam's foot was pressed hard against one of the walls, which so angered him that he beat the poor animal harder than before, until a second time he continued his journey, only to have his progress arrested for a third time in such a narrow passage that the angel blocked the way completely. The ass now not being able to go forward or turn round, lay down with her rider. At this Balaam was more angered than before, and he fell to beating the ass so violently that God gave to the animal the power of speech to exclaim, "What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" "Because," replied he, "thou hast deserved it in mocking me; had I a sword in my hand I would kill thee." To this the ass answered, "Am I not thine ass, upon which thou hast been used to ride ever since I was thine; did I ever serve thee so before?" Balaam could make no further reply than to admit what the ass had asserted, but still he did not comprehend the miracle that had been done, until the Lord caused him to see the angel standing in the way with a drawn sword. At this vision Balaam realized the wickedness of his intention and fell down on his face. The angel now spoke and warned him against his perversity, and said, if it had not been for the ass he would have killed him. Balaam sought pardon for his great sin and begged that he might be permitted to return home; but this the angel would not allow, because the Lord had a greater purpose for him; for, instead of cursing the Israelites, God would compel him to bless them.

As Balaam approached the Moabitish camp Balak came out to meet him, to show him greater honors and thus obtain his wish; but Balaam told him of God's warnings and tried to excuse himself. The king, however, still hoped to secure his desire by treating the prophet sumptuously, and he accordingly gave him a banquet to which were invited the princes and great men of his camp, and on the following day brought him to the high places of Baal, from whence an excellent view of the Israelites was afforded. While they were on the mount of Baal the prophet ordered seven oxen and as many rams to be prepared for a sacrifice, which were placed on seven altars; and while they were burning Balaam withdrew a few paces to consult God. The prophet being moved by the Lord, now raised his voice within the hearing of Balak, and predicted the greatness which Israel should attain, and of how they should prevail over all their enemies; concluding his prophecy by wishing that his lot might be with them in life and death.

Balak was greatly provoked by the prediction of Balaam, but he did not yet abandon the hope of influencing the prophet to curse Israel, still relying upon promises of great reward, for he knew the cupidity of the man with whom he was dealing. So he took Balaam up to the top of Mount Pisgah and besought him to deliver his curse from this station. Anxious to win the reward

Balaam again ordered a sacrifice made of seven oxen and seven rams, going off a little way he consulted the Lord, hoping that this time he would not be forbidden to do the will of Balak. But he was no more successful than before, because God put into his mouth a prediction that greater glories than those previously spoken should come to the house of Israel, concluding with these words: And to show their future strength and success, "the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift themselves up as a young lion; they shall not lie down until they eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain."

This second prophecy of Balaam greatly incensed Balak, who commanded him to make no more predictions, but in his eagerness to secure Balaam's curse upon Israel, the king for a third time repeated his efforts by taking the prophet to the top of a hill called Peor, which looked toward the wilderness. No stronger evidence of the influence which money exerts upon a man was ever afforded than this instance, where, after God's repeated warnings and His kindness so often shown to Balaam, the prophet's cupidity for the third time tempts him to set aside the Divine will. We would suppose that when implored to do that which God had three times expressly forbidden, Balaam would turn a deaf ear to Balak's entreaties; but so far from doing this he orders, as twice before, a sacrifice of seven oxen and rams. He was upon the point of asking God's advice again, when instantly the Spirit came upon him and he was made to exclaim, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lignaloës which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he has, as it were, the strength of a unicorn; he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones and pierce them through with his arrows. Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is thee that curseth thee." All this prophecy was to the exaltation of Israel, whose glorious future was thus proclaimed. It was given like the description of a vision, which no doubt rose before the sinful prophet, and as in a dream he spoke of that which he beheld: Israel possessing all the fruitful valleys of Palestine, a power feared by neighboring nations, victor in a thousand battles, and a people directed and protected by the omnipotent arm of the Almighty.

Stung to madness by Balaam's evil prophecies, Balak upbraided him soundly and bade him to be gone, "for I thought," said he, "to have promoted thee to great honor if thou hadst answered my designs in cursing Israel, but the Lord hath hindered thy judgment." Balaam was much depressed and excused himself by saying that he could only speak the words which God had put into his mouth. His unfathomable wickedness, however, was yet further thereby to still obtain a portion of the reward promised—by

advice to Balak to send fair daughters of the Moabites and Midianites in the camp of the Israelites to draw them into idolatry and otherwise corrupt the people in introducing practices unknown to them before.

The wicked advice of Balaam was acted upon, and with such effect that the Israelites were induced by the fair daughters sent among them to worship even the gods of Baal-peor, and also to perpetrate such foul acts that God's resentment was fearfully exhibited. He ordered Moses to take the chief idolaters and hang them before the people, which was accordingly done; but there were other sins committed besides idolatry, which the Lord would not suffer to go unpunished. Among the princes of the house of Simeon was one Zimri, who took a Midian woman named Cozbi, the daughter of a prince, and leading her, as if to parade his infamy in contempt of Moses, to his tent, there committed an unpardonable abomination. No one attempted to punish the prince, because perhaps of his station and influence, until Phinehas, a grandson of Aaron, who observed the shameless act, went out from the assembly straight to Zimri's tent and with a javelin ran both the offenders through and killed them while in the very act of pollution.

As a punishment for their idolatry and lewdness God sent a plague among the Israelites which destroyed no less than twenty-four thousand of the people, but the wrath of God was taken away by the act of Phinehas, and the plague stayed. For this act in defense of God's laws Phinehas was highly commended, and upon himself and posterity the priesthood was perpetually settled.

THE ISRAELITES GO TO BATTLE WITH THE MIDIANITES.

By direction of God Moses now ordered that another census be taken of the Israelites who were above twenty years of age, that their effective strength for fighting might be determined. By this enumeration it was shown that there were 601,730 men capable of bearing arms, which was just 820 less than when the first census was taken before Sinai, thirty-eight years before. Considering the many thousands that had been destroyed in the mean time by plagues and visitations of God's wrath, and the hardships through which the people had passed, their reproduction must have been very rapid.

After the completion of the enumeration Joshua was consecrated by the high priest Eleazar as the successor of Moses, whom God had ordained should not enter the promised land because of his sin at the rock of Meribah, as already described.

Although the fighting strength of the Israelites was not nearly equal to that of the Midianites and their allies, it was nevertheless determined to give them battle, in the Lord's name, and to punish them for their artifice in sending their women into the camp of Israel to corrupt the people. The army was duly marshalled, and with the trumpets pealing they set forth for the mountains where the Midianites lay encamped, but ready for fighting notwithstanding Balaam's unfavorable auguries. The battle was furious for a long

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time, but the Israelites were at length victorious, slaying not only Balak, but four other kings of Midian also, and all the males of the tribes. Among the killed was the wicked Balaam, whose desire for the rewards of Balak was not diminished by God's commands and miracles, and he thus espoused the Midian cause and was properly punished for his cupidity and treachery.

The results of this battle were of the utmost importance to the Israelites, for they now came into possession of the entire country east of Jordan, which was afterward given to the tribes of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh, but they were still confederated together for mutual defense. The line of separation between them was so distinct, however, that a member of one tribe was not



DEFEAT OF THE MIDIANITES.

"And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses; and they slew all the males."—NUM. xxxi. 7.

permitted to marry the member of another, a law which was established in order that every one might enjoy the inheritance of his father.

DEATH OF MOSES.

The time which God had appointed for the death of Moses was now near at hand. Already he had received a command to go up to the top of Mount Abarim, from whence he might obtain a view of the promised land, but which he might not enter. In the solemnity of the parting hour Moses therefore

assembled all the people of Israel and there delivered to them his last words, which must have been extremely affecting to those who remembered how their fathers, whom he had led out of bondage, had so often rebelled against him and more than once sought his life for acts committed in fulfilment of God's decrees that were given to promote their happiness. The forty years of their wanderings were now completed, but of those who first went out of Egypt with Moses not one who was at that time twenty years of age, save Joshua, Caleb and Moses, were living now; all had died, as the Lord had foretold, for the sin of rebelling against God and their chosen leader, as we have already described.

When the people were all assembled Moses repeated to them the story of their tribulations in bondage and in wildernesses through which they had passed, not neglecting to remind them of how merciful and long-suffering God had been, and of the disobedience, unruliness and iniquity they had been so repeatedly guilty of; but though it was primarily their own wickedness which brought upon himself the sentence by which he was forbidden to enter the promised land, yet he had now no other feeling than that of love for his people, with whom he had striven and suffered so long. He therefore instructed them in their religious duties, encouraged them to be faithful to God and promised them every blessing if they remained righteous, but that calamity would assail those who kept not the commandments. He also sang a song under inspiration of the Lord, in which he recited the compassion of God and the wrath which their iniquities would kindle; this song he charged the people to learn, as it might prove a witness for God against them. He then gave them a book of laws by which their temporal and spiritual affairs should be conducted, and ordered that it be placed in the side of the ark in charge of the Levites for their expounding.

Having concluded his warnings and advice to the Israelites, "Moses went up from the plains of Nebo (*the head*), to the summit of Pisgah (*the heights*), that is over against Jericho. And Jehovah showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, even unto the uttermost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar." All this land God told Moses should be possessed by the Israelites, being the same that he had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When God had thus spoken, the hand of death was laid upon Moses, and on this sacred spot of glorious prospect the great leader of Israel was buried by God, "in a valley in the land of Moab over against Bethpeor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

At the time of Moses' death he was one hundred and twenty years old, his allotted years being three less than were given to Aaron, who, being three years the elder, died at the age of one hundred and twenty-three years. By this reading it appears that Moses died within a very short time, a few months at most, after the death of Aaron.

CHAPTER X.

THE STORY OF JOB'S FAITH.

Job.



THE Book of Job is, in some respects, the most singular in the Bible. It is believed, from the language of the text, that Job was contemporary with Moses, say 1520 B. C., but there is absolutely no means of determining when he lived. He makes no mention of either Moses or the exodus, from which it has been concluded that he lived some time anterior to the promulgation of the Mosaic law; besides, the language is more nearly like the Arabic than that of any other book in the Bible. Ezekiel (xiv. 20,) compares him with Noah and Daniel in righteousness, and as deserving of the largest favors that God bestows on man, while St. James (v. 11,) refers to his patience as a maxim known to all men.

At the end of the Greek and Arabic copies of the Book of Job, and also of the Vulgate (ancient Latin, or Roman Catholic version of the Scriptures,) is found the following account of the patriarch, said to have been taken from the Syriac: "Job dwelt in the Ausitis, on the confines of Idumæa and Arabia; his name at first was Jobah. He married an Arabian woman, by whom he had a son called Ermon. He himself was son of Zerah, of the posterity of Esau, and a native of Bozrah, so that he was the fifth from Abraham. He reigned in Edom, and the kings before and after him reigned in this order:—Balak, the son of Beor, in the city of Dinhabah; after him, Job (or Jobah). Job was succeeded by Husham, prince of Teman. After him reigned Hadad, the son of Bedad, who defeated the Midianites in the fields of Moab. The name of the city was Arith. Job's friends who came to visit him were, Eliphaz, of the posterity of Esau, and king of Teman; Bildad, the king of the Shuhites; and Zophar, king of the Naamathites."

Since there is nothing in Job which bears any connection with the historical narrative of Israel or any other people, we must conclude that the story is introduced with no other purpose than to serve as an illustration of the patience and resignation which those who truly love God and appreciate His mercy, should ever stand ready to manifest. Particularly appropriate was the example of Job in the time he lived, for we have seen, in the face of all the

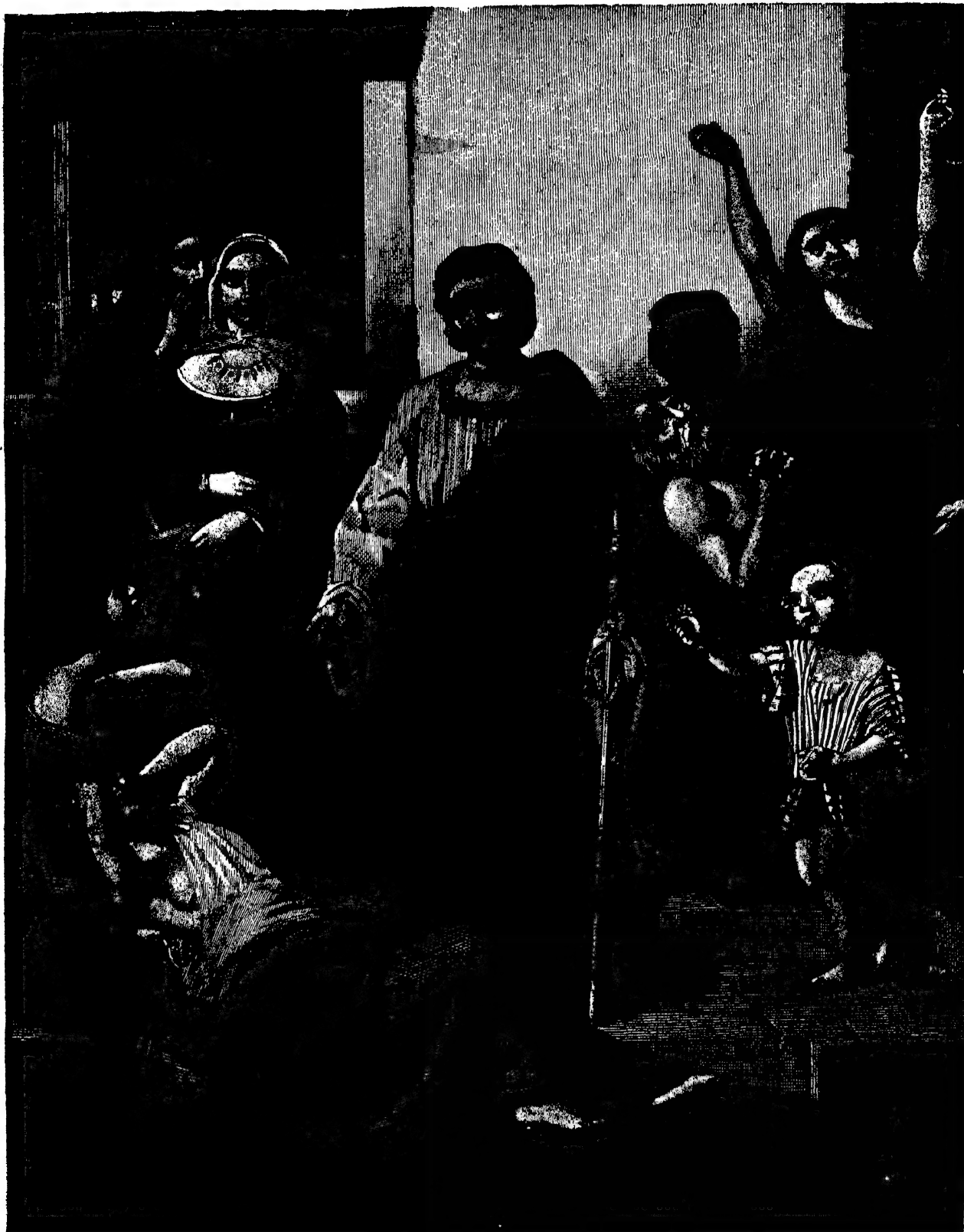
THE BEAUTIFUL STORY.

miracles and mercies of God in delivering the Israelites from bondage, how prone they were to idolatry and other forms of wickedness whenever dangers threatened or discomforts were encountered. Whatever its effects were upon the people, the lesson was a beautiful and practical one, and almost equally adaptable to our relations with God to-day.

The Bible tells us that "there was a man in the land of Uz (Aramæa) named Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil. He had seven sons and three daughters who were his delight, for in them he took great pleasure. But besides these his possessions included 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 1000 bullocks, 500 she-asses, and other effects of great value. Each of his sons was provided with an estate of his own, for we are told that "his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and drink with them." When such feasts were made Job offered up burnt-offerings for each of his children and sanctified them, having a fear that while they outwardly appeared to serve God, yet their hearts might still harbor some impure thought.

The righteousness of Job was greater even than his riches, which exceeded that of any other man in the east, but Satan had a mind to test him under afflictions, urging that distress would make the most upright unmindful of former blessings and turn his heart to bitterness. Trusting in his righteousness, God suffered Job to be persecuted by Satan in the following manner: When Job's sons and daughters were feasting in the eldest brother's house a messenger came hastily to the godly patriarch, and told him that the Sabeans had stolen all his oxen and asses, and killed all his servants; another messenger came in while the first was yet speaking to tell him that a fire had descended from heaven and burned up all his sheep and the shepherds that attended them; then another ran in and told him that the Chaldeans had stolen all his camels and killed the servants; still another came with information that while his ten children were feasting a great wind had blown down the house in which they were gathered and killed them. When Job heard this he "rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped; and said, 'Naked came I into the world and bereft of all I have shall I go out again. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

In this hour of woe Job turned not away from God, but blessed the hand that had caused him to suffer. Satan asked permission to again test the righteousness of Job, saying, "But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." By which he meant if God would afflict His devoted servant with a keen bodily suffering he would become embittered in his heart and secretly, if not openly, denounce the cause. So the Lord answered, "Behold, he is in thine hand; but spare his life." Receiving God's permission to make this second test, Satan afflicted him with boils "from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head."



(132)

THE HAPPY DAYS OF JOB.

"I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out."—JOB xxix. 15, 16.

Job's sufferings were so great that he took a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself and sat down in ashes, as a sign of his inconsolable anguish. Seeing him in this adversity his wife called on him to curse God and die; to which he answered: "Thou speakest as a foolish woman speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

When Job had lain in his affliction for several days and his troubles were reported to all the people thereabout, three of his friends came to mourn with him and to give such comfort as they were able to afford. These three friends were Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, who represented the wisdom of the age, being learned in tradition and expounders of God's laws. When they first beheld Job they were so affected by his supreme wretchedness that for seven days and nights they could not summon up courage to condole with him; which seems to have rather increased his anguish, for his agony now forced him to curse the day of his birth. Then follows a discussion, the effects of which are felt to this day, for a principle was there established that is one of the foundation stones of God's universal mercy to mankind. His friends insisted that his afflictions were caused by some disobedience to God, in proof of which they urged the law that suffering always proves the commission of some special sin.

To this plausible reasoning Job replied that while he had no doubt of God's justice, yet punishment does not always follow upon guilt, or even prove the commission of a sin.

The three friends again persisted in the law of retribution, and cited many examples (xv.), to which Job answered by acknowledging that the hand of God is in his afflictions, but maintains that it is not alone the ungodly whom God punishes, nor the righteous alone whom He prospers. He shows them that in all times, and under their own observation, the most wicked of men have enjoyed an undisturbed life of prosperity, by which we must conclude that God extends his mercy to all alike, reserving His punishments and rewards for His own good time, and in another world.

Job bore his afflictions with composure for a time, but became less patient by reason of the argument of his friends, who continued to charge that his sufferings were undoubtedly due to the commission of some sin, and urged him to seek God for a pardon. Elihu, who also came to visit him, though younger than the three other visitors, rebuked Job for finding fault with God, and for seeking to compare the Lord with things of his own understanding. The discussion, after many days, was terminated by the voice of God Himself, who spoke out of a whirlwind, asking, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" He then calls on Job to answer Him how came all the things on the earth: the sea and its creatures, the land and its productions, the sky and its constellations, the heart and its understanding? Job humbled himself before God, being made conscious of his weakness and insignificance by the reflections thus excited; whereat the Lord asked, "Wilt thou also disannul My judgments? wilt thou condemn Me, that thou mayest be

righteous." When God had thus spoken to Job and perceived how His servant was in earnest repentance for supposing that his afflictions were sent without proper cause, He rebuked the three friends for urging the law of retribution,



JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS.

"Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came every one from his own place."—JOB. ii. 11.

and confirmed the principle enunciated by Job. He also commanded them to take seven bullocks and as many rams to Job and offer them up as a burnt-offering, saying: "And My servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I

accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of Me the thing which is right, like My servant Job."

The Lord now found the occasion ripe for rewarding Job for the patience and righteousness he had exhibited; accordingly, He gave him twice as much of everything as he had before, including sheep, oxen, camels, asses and household possessions. The patriarch's brethren and sisters, and those of his acquaintance from all parts, now came to visit him, each bringing a present of money or jewelry as an evidence of his love and regard. After this the Lord also gave him seven sons and three daughters: of the latter it was said that no other women in all the land were so beautiful; and Job gave them an inheritance among their brothers so that the family ties remained unbroken. Job lived one hundred and forty years after receiving these double blessings and saw four generations of his children enjoying a prosperity sent by God.

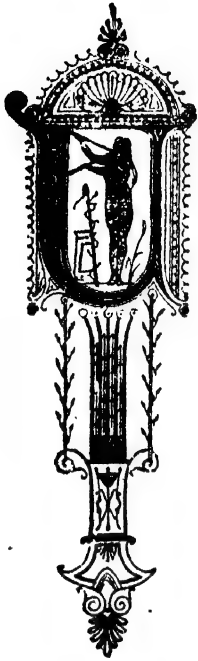
The Book of Job is the least understood portion of the Bible. No one has been able to discover when or by whom it was written, nor whether it is a description of a real incident or given as a parable and example to instruct those who profess to love God in the obedience which they should yield to whatever affliction may be sent upon them. If accepted upon this latter explanation of its purpose, the book is incomparably grand. Thomas Carlyle, viewing it as a parable, says:

"I call that, the Book of Job, aside from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble book! all men's book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem—man's destiny—and God's way with him here in this earth. And all in such free, flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody, and repose of reconciliation. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. So true every way; true eyesight and vision for all things; material things no less than spiritual; the horse—'hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?'—he *laughs* at the shaking of the spear!' Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind; so soft and great; as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit."

CHAPTER XI.

JOSHUA CHOSEN TO SUCCEED MOSES.

Joshua.



UPON the death of Moses, Joshua, whom the Bible first mentions as one of the twelve spies sent through Palestine, and who, with Caleb, found favor with the Lord, for urging the people to go up and possess the land, became the leader of Israel. He was the son of Nun, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, who was the younger son of Joseph, and who, we remember, received the chief blessing bestowed by his grandfather, Jacob. His name originally was Oshea, meaning *helper*, but Moses changed it to JOSHUA, thereby combining his original name with that of JEHOVAH, so that its significance would be, *God the helper*.

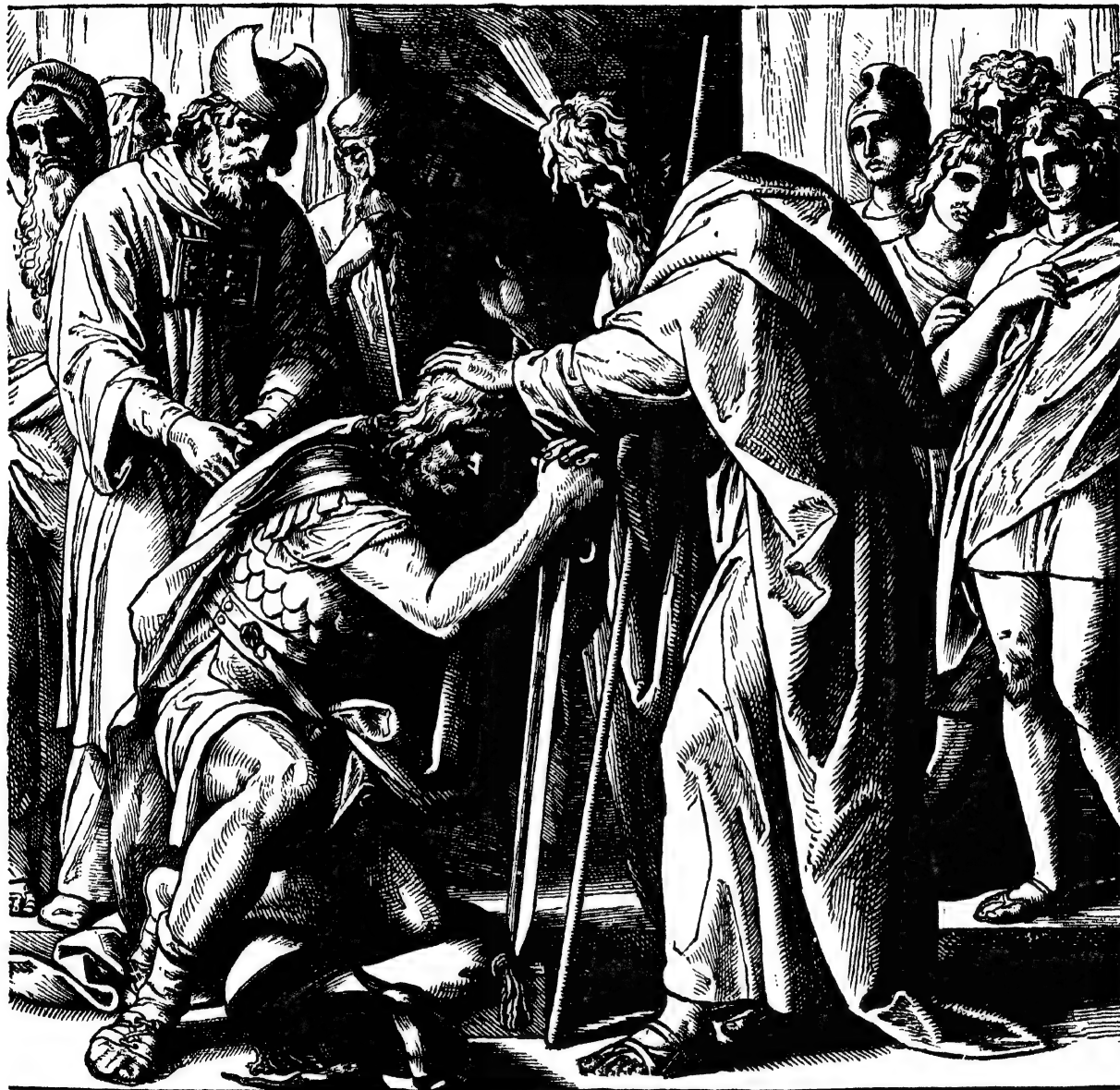
At the time of assuming leadership of Israel's hosts, Joshua was about eighty-three years of age. He had repeatedly shown his ability both in counsel and in command, and had proved so faithful a servant to Moses that it was no less the great prophet's will than that of God that he should succeed to the responsible trust of being chief over the Israelites.

When the successorship was therefore established God appeared to Joshua and told him to gather together all his people, and lead them across Jordan into the land that Moses was permitted to view. There were many warlike tribes west of Jordan, and of such great numbers that to attack them in their own defenses was very dangerous; nor could such a half-armed and poorly prepared army as the Israelites were hope to prevail, unless they received help from the Hand that had succored them so often in the hours of their deepest distress. To stimulate him to do that which was bidden God therefore assured Joshua that no man should be able to stand before him; that He would always be with him, and that the land of Canaan would be divided for an inheritance among the Israelites. "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

SPIES SENT INTO JERICO.

Joshua was greatly encouraged by the promises of God, and immediately prepared to cross the Jordan with his army and invade the country of the Canaanites, his first object being to attack the city of Jericho, which stood in a plain, six miles west of the Jordan. This place was the largest, richest and best fortified city in all Canaan, being the chief depot on the highway between

Palestine and Egypt. It was situated in the midst of a grove of palm-trees, from whence it took its name, which means *city of palms*, and was surrounded by a great wall, with gates for entrance, which were shut at night or when danger threatened. At intervals along the walls were observation houses, from



MOSES LAYING HIS HANDS UPON JOSHUA.

"And Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom ; for Moses had laid his hands upon him."

—DEUT. xxxiv. 9.

which an extensive view was obtained of the surrounding country, and here guards were stationed to give the alarm should any hostile body of men approach. At the time of which we write, the news of the victories of the Israelites, and their encampment near to the city, had spread all over the country, so that

Jericho, as well as other cities within the region, was in a state of preparation in anticipation of an attack.

Before passing the Jordan prudence admonished Joshua that he should first gain some positive information respecting the strength of the forces within Jericho, and to acquire that he sent two spies with instructions to enter the city and ascertain such things as might be of service for a beleaguering army to know.

The spies set out accordingly, and their object not being suspected by the Canaanites, they had no trouble in gaining entrance to the city. They found lodging on the first night in the house of a dissolute woman named Rahab, who, it appears, discovered their purpose; but she was so impressed by what she had heard—that the Israelites were the chosen people of God, and therefore under His protection, that instead of giving them over to the authorities she concealed them from the king's officers.

The text is somewhat confusing, so that it is impossible to understand positively whether, upon discovering the spies, Rahab reported their presence to the king and afterward repented and concealed them, or whether the report of their being at Rahab's house was circulated by some member of her household. We are told, however, that when the king's officers came to her house and ordered her to deliver up the men, she admitted that they had been in the house, but had now departed out of the city toward the Jordan. This seemed to satisfy the officers, for they went out immediately to follow, as the woman had directed. After their departure Rahab called the spies, and taking them to the roof of her house, there covered them with flax which had been laid to dry, and so kept them hid until it was dark. She now came to them and exacted a promise that when the Israelites should come into the city they would save her and her family from death. This promise being given, she let down the spies by a scarlet line from a window of her house that overlooked the walls, which cord was to remain suspended thereafter to indicate her house to the Israelites.

The spies escaped by the strategy of Rahab, but knowing that the Canaanites were still searching the country for them, they fled to the mountains, and there remained for three days before they were able to return to Joshua. When at last they came before the great leader of Israel, they told him how all the Canaanites were without courage and would not fight because they believed, as did Rahab, that God was commanding the Israelites and doing wonderful miracles to bring them into possession of the land.

SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF JERICHO.

Upon receiving the spies' report Joshua ordered his army and his people to break camp and march to the Jordan River, where they stopped for three days, and the ark was set up. During this time Joshua sent his officers, through the host, to tell them that when they should see the priests take up

the ark of the covenant and move forward, then all Israel should follow after them, but they must not approach nearer than two thousand cubits (about half a mile). Then Joshua bade the people to sanctify themselves, for on the morrow the Lord would show them great wonders.

When the morrow arrived Joshua called all the people to witness a miracle which God was about to do, to show them that He was with them in their undertaking; he then told them to stand by Jordan's brink, while one member from each of the twelve tribes should take up the ark and bear it across the waters (which were now greatly swollen, as is usual during the harvest time). The people did as they were instructed, and stood upon the brink while the twelve men chosen took up the ark and started with it toward the swift-flowing river; but as they dipped their feet into the stream the waters parted, as did the Red Sea, and left a dry path by which all the host passed over. But when they had arrived on the other side the waters still remained parted until representatives of the twelve tribes were sent by Joshua to the dry bed of the stream to take up from there as many stones, which were ordered to be carried and deposited in the place where they should lodge at night. After this order was given Joshua commanded the twelve to return again to the midst of the dry bed with as many stones, and there set them up as a witness of the miracle which had been performed. When this was done the waters came together as before and overflowed the banks.

When night came on the Israelites encamped at Gilgal, in sight of Jericho, and there set up the twelve stones that had been brought out of the Jordan, as a memorial of the great thing which God had done. This event transpired, as Biblical scholars assert, April 13th, 1451 B. C., which was the day preceding that appointed for the selection of the Paschal Lamb, and the next day the people kept the Passover, which was its first celebration on the soil of their inheritance since leaving Egypt.

On the day following the sacred ceremonies the Israelites tasted bread made from corn which was taken from the Canaanites, and henceforth lived off the product of the land, as manna ceased to fall on this date.

Everything was now in readiness for the march against Jericho, but as Joshua went forward he saw standing in his way a man with his sword drawn, as if disputing the passage. Joshua challenged him by saying, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" To which reply was made, "Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." Joshua then perceived that it was an angel who had spoken, and he fell on his face to worship, saying, "What saith my Lord unto His servant?" The angel then told him to take off his shoes, as he was now standing upon holy ground; and when he had thus done, the angel spoke again, saying, "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams'.

horns; and on the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the rams' horns, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him."

Joshua observed well all the instructions which had been given him, and



AN ANGEL, APPEARING TO JOSHUA.

"As Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come."—JOSHUA v. 14.

sent his army to march round the city, preceded by the ark carried by priests, once every day for six days; and on the seventh day they marched about Jericho seven times, and then blew the trumpets and shouted as they had been commanded, when, behold, the walls of the city tumbled down and there was no defense remaining. The Israelites now rushed into the city and put to the sword every man, woman, child, ox, sheep and ass that they found therein, sparing nothing except Rahab and her family, according to the promises made

to her by the spies. Thus was Jericho utterly demolished, and Joshua set his curse upon any one who should attempt to rebuild it. The curse was afterward fulfilled when Hiel, a Bethelite, attempted to restore the city, for Abiram, his oldest son, died while he was laying the foundation, and Segub, his youngest, expired while the gates were being set up.

Rahab, although a depraved woman, was richly rewarded for her faith and good services by being given a distinguished position among the Israelites. She married Salmon, probably one of the spies, and became the mother of Boaz, who was afterward the great-grandfather of David, and was thus in the genealogy of Christ.

But among the Israelites who participated in the sack of Jericho there was one who committed a great sin, which resulted in a disaster to his people at the attack upon Ai, the next city that was besieged. Joshua gave an order, before Jericho had fallen, that all the gold and silver which might be captured should be placed in the sacred treasure and there kept for the service of the Lord. This one recreant, who was quite as avari-



FALLING OF THE WALLS OF JERICO.

"And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets."—JOSHUA vi. 9.

cious as Balaam, in the excitement of the pillage, seized upon a rich Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, valued at fifty shekels weight. These he hid by burying them in the earth beneath his tent, where they were afterward found by men whom Joshua sent to search for them.

The culprit was not apprehended, nor was he known until God chose to reveal him in His own mysterious way, as will be explained.

The city nearest to Jericho, possessed by the Canaanites, was called Ai, and to this place Joshua sent out spies as before. They reported the place to be poorly defended and so easy of capture that a detachment of only three thousand Israelites was sent against it. Instead of meeting with an easy vic-

tory the Israelites were defeated with a loss of thirty-six men, and were pursued as far as Shebarim. This defeat was not so disastrous by reason of the losses sustained, as for the effect it had upon the Israelites, who feared God had forsaken them. Joshua and the elders fell down in mourning before the ark and cried aloud to Jehovah. Their prayers were answered by a command which God gave to Joshua to sanctify the people, and on the morrow cast lots to determine who was the offender. When the casting was first made it fell upon the tribe of Judah, next on the family of Zerah, and the third time upon the house of Zabdi, all of whom were taken before Jehovah at the ark and there examined. Among the number was Achan, the son of Carmi, whom the Lord caused to make a confession of his guilt. The culprit was speedily stoned to death and his body burned, together with his children, cattle and tent, while over the ashes was raised a cairn to mark the place of execution, which place was called Achor, meaning *trouble*.

THE CAPTURE OF AI AND LEAGUE OF THE KINGS.

After Achan had been punished, God appeared to Joshua and bade him take courage again, for he should continue to be victorious until all Canaan was subjugated. God also told Joshua to renew the attack upon Ai, which would fall into his hands if he heeded these instructions: He (Joshua) should take a force of five thousand men and lead them beyond the west side of Ai, where they were to lie in ambush near the city, ready to rush upon it when the sign should be made; Joshua was next directed to take thirty thousand more men and appear in the valley before Ai, as if to challenge the people therein to combat; but when the army of Ai should come out, Joshua was ordered to flee before them as if in great fear, and by this strategy was to draw them away from the city, so that the five thousand lying in ambush might rush out of their covert and into the city and thus possess its defenses.

These instructions Joshua obeyed and found everything to transpire as the Lord had promised, so that when the king of Ai came out Joshua fled with his army, which gave so much confidence to the people of Ai that every man therein left the city and went in pursuit of the Israelites. They followed these so far that when they left off pursuing and started to return they saw their city in flames and being pillaged by the five thousand whose presence had not been suspected. This did not end their troubles, for they were now in a valley between two armies of the Israelites, unable to escape, and overwhelmed by superior forces. In this position Joshua fell upon them with both wings of his army and put every man, woman and child to the sword, with the exception of the king of Ai, whom the Israelites captured and afterward hanged upon a tree. Over his body was gathered a great heap of stones, which were placed as a memorial of the city, and are said to remain there to this day.

The Biblical account of the capture of Ai intimates that the town of Bethel was taken and sacked at the same time, but gives no particulars by which we

might form an opinion of the importance of either place. However, we do know that by this victory the Israelites gained possession of all the principal passes in the Jordan valley and obtained unobstructed access to the open country in the region of Central Palestine, though the main body was kept encamped at Gilgal on account, no doubt, of its strategic position.

The victorious march of the Israelites through Palestine spread terror among the people of all Canaan until, for mutual defense, the kings west of Jordan and as far north as Lebanon, formed a league and consolidated their forces to oppose the further advance of Joshua. These kings, though no doubt invested with royal prerogatives, held dominion over limited districts, with a city as the capital, so that they were scarcely more than municipal masters; and their influence



JOSHUA WATCHING THE DESTRUCTION OF AI.

"And he (Joshua) took about five thousand men and set them to lie in ambush."

—JOSHUA viii. 12.

was further diminished by the perpetual feuds which existed between them. But the invading hosts of Israel were regarded as a common enemy, come to despoil all the cities without regard to the tribal ownership, so, for the

time being they ceased warring against each other and formed a confederation which increased their strength and gave them hope of being now able to drive the Israelites out of Canaan.

There was only one tribe, of all the numerous hordes that claimed a portion of Palestine, which sought to escape the sword of Israel by suing for peace and protection. This tribe was the Gibeonites, whose city, then called Gibeon, but now, El-jib, was chief of the four cities of Hivites and lay directly opposite the pass, or valley of Ai, so that it was the next city Joshua intended attacking.

The Gibeonites had heard of some of the wondrous things performed by the Israelites by Divine assistance, and though they were idolaters, and knew nothing of the true God, their fears were greatly excited by the miracles which were reported to them as having been done by the Israelites, and their confidence in the confederation of the Canaanitish kings was by no means strong. They had recourse to a curious strategy to obtain an interview with Joshua, knowing that if they should appear before him as Gibeonites he would not treat with them, and at the same time appreciating the necessity of immediate action before the Israelites should move upon their city. This strategy consisted in a delegation of a dozen or more elders, or wise men of Gibeon, clothing themselves like so many way-worn travellers, with ragged and dust-laden clothes, old mouldy provisions and unkempt beards and hair, and in this tired and faint appearance they came before Joshua, claiming that they had travelled from a very far country, and thirsted and hungered greatly upon the way. They further asserted that they had heard of the fame of Jehovah and of His wonderful deeds for Israel, and had come to form a league with God's people.

Instead of consulting the oracle before the ark, as the Lord had admonished him, as the successor of Moses, to do, in all cases involving the welfare of his people, Joshua was immediately convinced of all the Gibeonites had told him, and thereupon entered into a league, or treaty, with them, by which their lives were to be spared.

Three days after a league was formed with the cunning Gibeonites, Joshua and his army went against Gibeon, but when he was upon the point of attacking it the people came out and reminded him of the treaty and promise he had made. Joshua now perceived how he had been deceived by the representations of the travel-worn strangers, but, notwithstanding the grumblings of his army, he respected the promises he had made and spared the Gibeonites. But, by direction of God, their deceit was punished by Joshua ordering that they should henceforth be slaves to the Israelites, and should be "hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God forever."

Five of the other kings of cities in Palestine, learning of the defection of the Gibeonites, consolidated their forces and laid siege to Gibeon, intending to take the city—or, rather, the four cities, belonging to the Gibeonites—and put the people to death.



AN ANGEL, LEADS THE ARMY OF JOSHUA.

"And the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with great slaughter."—JOSHUA x. 10.

THE BATTLE OF BETH-HORON.

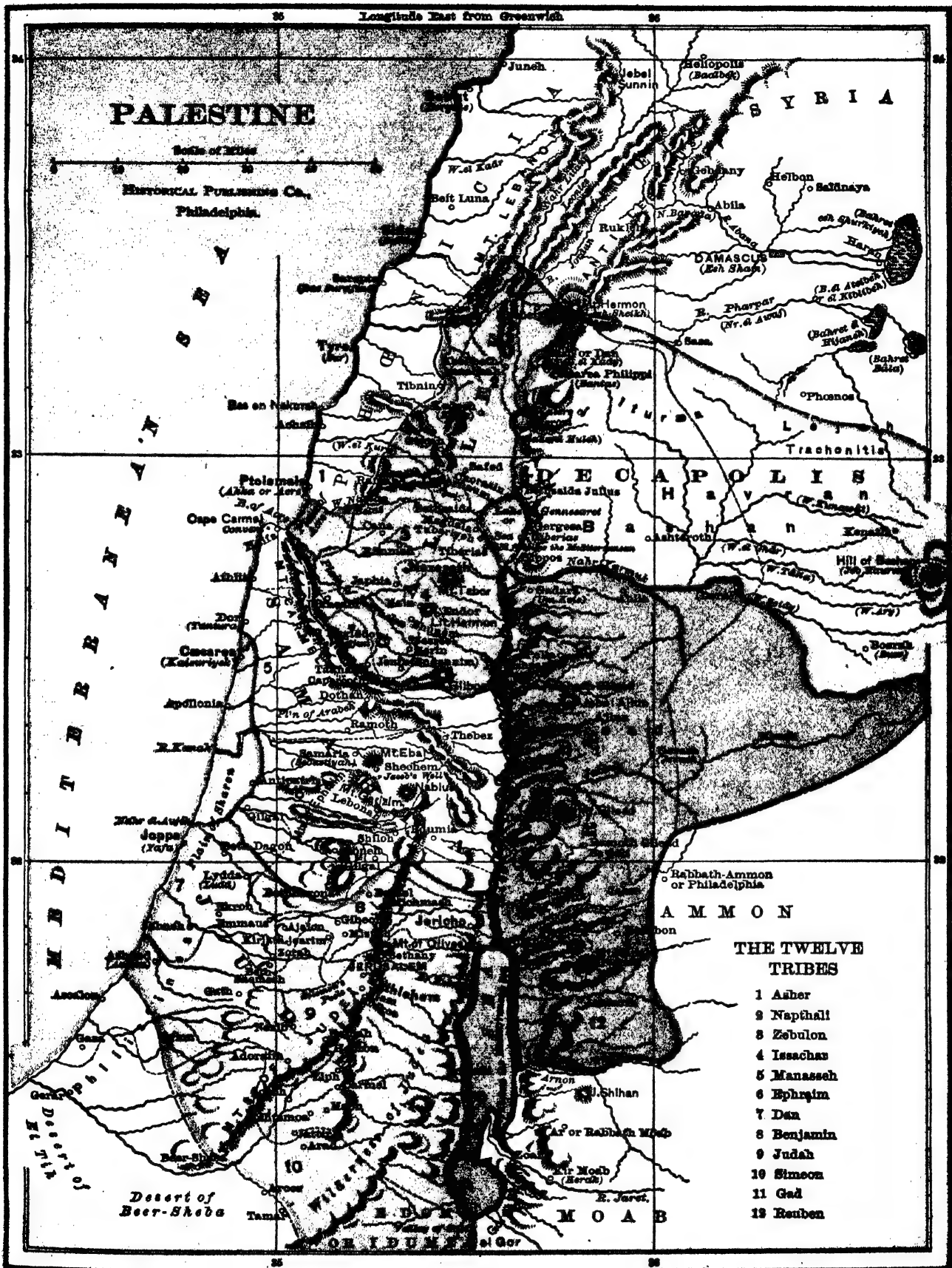
When the Gibeonites saw the approaching armies of the Amorites, under the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon, and knew their hostile intentions, they sent messengers to Joshua, whose camp was still at Gilgal, begging him to come and help them. The cry for help was not in vain, for Joshua at once assembled his army and, by a forced march during the night, fell upon the confederated Amorites early in the morning at Beth-horon, and routed them with great slaughter, but not until the battle had waged with uncertain results for nearly the entire day. In this fight Joshua received such direct aid from God that his own generalship seems to have played no conspicuous part, and to Jehovah must all the credit be given.

When, at eventime, the Amorites began to give way and were retreating down the hill of Beth-horon, a great hail-storm was sent upon them, the stones of which were so large that more were killed in the storm than were slain by Israel's sword. Panic now seized them, and the combined Amorite army was able to offer no further resistance against their relentless pursuers. The sun, however, was now shining low in the heavens, and the rapid approach of night would put an end to the slaughter, when Joshua prayed to God that the sun might stand still upon Gibeon, and the moon remain bright over Ajalon—an adjacent city. This prayer was answered, for the sun did not go down that day, but stood in the heavens, until the Amorites were nearly all slaughtered, and the five kings pursued to a place in the plains by the sea, where they hid themselves in a cave. Here they remained only a short time in security, for they were soon discovered, and, at the bidding of Joshua, they were captured and brought before him, who ordered, as God had directed, the captains of Israel to each put his foot upon the necks of the five kings, as a sign that thus should Israel do to all her enemies. After this, the kings were hanged on a tree, where their bodies remained until evening, when they were cut down and thrown into the cave where they had first hidden, and the mouth of the cave was then closed with great stones.

"So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded. And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon. And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel."

JOSHUA DIVIDES THE LAND AND MAKES A NEW COVENANT.—HIS DEATH.

The battles which Joshua fought in Canaan were very many, but only a few are described in the Bible. His conquests, however, are summed up in the subjugation of no less than thirty-one kings on the west of Jordan, besides Sihon, Balak and Og, whom he defeated before crossing the Jordan for Jericho.





JOSHUA COMMANDING THE SUN TO STAND STILL.

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon."—JOSHUA x. 12.

These kings ruled as many cities, but in not every instance did defeat of the Canaanites lead to an occupation of the cities, for we know that Jerusalem, whose king was slain at Gibeon, was not captured until after the death of Joshua. Several other cities, though subjugated, did not fall into the hands of the Israelites until some time after the events just narrated.

But in defeating the thirty-one kings, Joshua came into possession of all the country belonging to the seven nations which was first promised to Abraham, viz.: the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites and Girgashites, but there still remained a considerable portion of Palestine unsubdued, which, however, God promised anew should be given to the Israelites. These latter conquests were not reserved for Joshua, for he was now old, and had been fighting almost continually for six years. But the time had now come for a division of the whole of Palestine among the tribes of Israel, which Joshua proceeded to award as God had directed him to do. The division was made by allotment among the nine and a half tribes, the two and a half tribes having already received their portion from Moses east of the Jordan. The Levites were not included among the tribes who were to receive an inheritance of land, for "Jehovah, God of Israel, was their inheritance," they being consecrated to the priesthood. This would have left eleven tribes to be provided for, but the tribe of Joseph was divided into the tribes of Ephraim and of Manasseh, so that there still remained twelve, as originally.

When the allotments had all been made, Joshua reserved for himself Timnath-serah, in Mount Ephraim, where he built a city and gave to it the name Timnath. There were then appointed six cities of refuge, three on the west of Jordan, viz.: Kadesh, Shechem and Hebron; and three on the east, viz.: Bezer, Ramoth and Golan. To the Levites forty-eight cities were given, which were awarded in proportion to the possessions of all the other tribes.

Joshua, being now feeble from age, and realizing that but a few months separated him from his grave, sent for all the judges, officers and heads of tribes to come before him, as Moses had done before ascending Mount Pisgah; and when they had gathered he gave them an exhortation to be courageous and to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses. This was the sum of his advice, but he enlarged this counsel so that it might be more effective, by rehearsing all that God had done for Israel since the day of their coming out of Egypt. He reminded them that of themselves they could do nothing, but that through the aid of Jehovah they had triumphed over their enemies and become possessed of cities which they had not built, and of vineyards which they had not planted.

He exhorted them especially not to affiliate or marry with the idolatrous peoples of Palestine, nor to cease striving for the rest of the land which God had promised, and warned them that the day they departed from his counsel and forgot their duties to Jehovah, they should certainly be scattered and driven from the land that had been given them.

To the exhortations of Joshua the people responded by promises to fulfil the law of Moses and to cleave unto the God who had blessed them so abundantly. Thus was a new covenant made, for a witness of which a great stone was set up under an oak tree, perhaps the same shade under which Abraham and Jacob had spread their tents.

Soon after the establishing of the covenant Joshua died, being aged one hundred and ten years. He was buried on the borders of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. The death of this great and good man was properly bewailed by the Israelites, for of all of Israel's host he was perhaps the most righteous. Moses and Aaron had sinned repeatedly, but of Joshua there is not written a single act wherein he transgressed God's will.

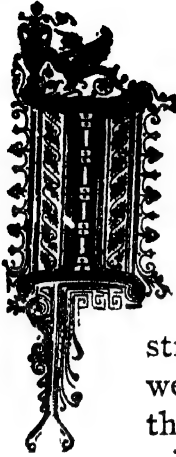
Directly after Joshua's death Eleazar, the high priest, the son of Aaron, sickened and died also. He was buried beside his son Phinehas, who, we remember, killed Prince Zimri for sinning with the Midian woman, in Mount Ephraim.



CHAPTER XII.

GOD IS FORSAKEN BY THE ISRAELITES.

Judges.



It would appear that a large portion of Palestine was left unsubdued at the time of Joshua's death for a wise purpose, since God desired to know if the Israelites would continue to accept Him in the hour of adversity, or complain against Him, as they had always inclined to do, during their journeyings, when trouble threatened. Hence their enemies were permitted to continue still strong in many portions of Palestine, and so numerous in the southwest that they refused to yield to the Israelites. Thus God foresaw that a conflict would arise which would determine their loyalty, and with what measure they were deserving of His further protection.

The generation which lived in the time of Joshua continued faithful to the laws which they were exhorted to observe, but when these had finally perished, the next generation forsook God, neglected to regard the counsel of their fathers, and degenerated so rapidly that they were soon confirmed idolaters. Their iniquities began by marrying, against the injunctions of Joshua, among the seven nations they had conquered; and from this a worship of the god Baal, in groves sacred to this false deity, was very soon instituted and the true God utterly forgotten.

For the idolatrous iniquities of the Israelites, God gave them proper punishment by sending the king of Mesopotamia against them, by whom they were not only beaten in battle, but were kept in slavery for a term of eight years. In their afflictions only did they remember God, and while their backs were sorely burdened they called aloud for deliverance. Their petitions were not without avail, for the Lord appointed Othniel, a younger brother of Caleb, as a leader of Israel, and he led the Israelites in a revolt against the king of Mesopotamia, and in a great battle which followed he gained a decisive victory that freed his countrymen. After this fight the Israelites were at peace for a period of forty years.

But when Othniel died, who had been a wise and God-fearing judge in Israel, the people relapsed again into sinful ways and again provoked the Lord's anger, so that Eglon, king of Moab, formed an offensive alliance with Ammon and Amalek, who combined their forces against the Israelites, whom they beat at Jericho and captured the city, reducing the inhabitants to slavery, in which condition they remained for eighteen years.

The wars in which the Israelites were beaten, by reason of their diso-

bedience and idolatry, did not involve all the chosen people at one time. As already stated, when Joshua made a division of all the land among the twelve tribes, he did not confine the division to those portions of Palestine that had been subjugated, but because God had promised that all the country should be given to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joshua allotted the whole of Palestine—those portions that still remained in possession of the enemies of Israel, as well as those that had been taken and occupied. It was the efforts made by those members of the tribes whose allotment fell to districts yet unsubdued, that led to such repeated wars, in which, because the tribes neglected God's ordinances and covenants, the results were not always favorable to the Israelites.

THE ASSASSINATION OF KING EGLON.

After the Hebrews had served Eglon for a period of eighteen years, a deliverer appeared in the person of Ehud, a Benjaminite (generally written Benjamite), who was left-handed. Ehud did not foment an uprising among the people as Othniel had done, but had recourse to a strategy which served his purpose most effectively. Making for himself a dagger, with this weapon concealed under his cloak he awaited outside the king's door, while he sent in a messenger to tell his majesty that he had an important communication for him which he bore direct from God.

No doubt flattered by the pretense that God had regarded him with such consideration as to send a messenger to him, the king, as Ehud requested, sent all his servants out of the palace, that he might be alone with the celestial messenger when the communication was delivered. The auspicious opportunity was thus presented, and Ehud quickly dispatched the king with a thrust of his dagger. The assassin then ran out, locking every door that he passed through, and soon sped away over the hills to alarm his people and prepare them for a desperate battle which he promised that God would help them to win.

When the king's servants attempted to reach the royal apartments they found the doors locked, which they took to mean that his majesty had thus sought to prevent interruption while considering some weighty matter brought to his attention by the late messenger. After leaving him alone for several hours, and finding the doors yet locked, some alarm was felt, which grew apace, until, at the venture of offending the king, should there be no proper reason for their suspicions, the doors were unbarred and the body of the murdered ruler found bloodless on the throne. By this time, however, Ehud had made good his escape by fleeing to Mount Ephraim, where, by blowing his trumpet, he assembled a great body of Israelites. When the Moabites came out to fight them, the Lord gave Ehud the victory, so that he slew ten thousand Moabite soldiers, letting not one escape.

After this event, but how long is not intimated in the Biblical account,

Shamgar succeeded Ehud as judge of Israel. During his incumbency a large body of Philistines went against the Israelites to recover one of the cities that had been taken from them, but Shamgar, who seems to have been not only a *desperately brave man*, but wonderfully strong as well, seized a large stick used in driving oxen, and, with this simple weapon, lay about him so vigorously among the Philistines that he slew six hundred men and put the entire army to flight.

STORY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.

It will be remembered that in an earlier chapter there are descriptions of the blessings and prophecies of Jacob upon his twelve sons, the youngest of whom, Benjamin, the great prophet predicted, "should raven as a wolf." We shall now see how truly this prophecy came to pass. The event which is about to be described occurred before Ehud, whom we have just noticed, was born, but the exact time, or sequence of events, is not given in the Bible, so that sequence is not absolutely necessary here.

A member of the house of Levi, possibly a priest, had taken a woman to live with him, according to the custom of the time. This woman subsequently became unfaithful, and she was sent back to her father's house at Bethlehem. After she had remained there four months the Levite longed for her, probably believing that he had condemned her too hastily, and, with a view of effecting a reconciliation, he went to Bethlehem, hoping to bring her home with him. The father-in-law gave him a hearty welcome, and together they feasted for three days. By a pressing invitation the Levite remained yet two days longer, when, having now spent five days with his father-in-law, he excused himself from further prolonging his visit, and started back to Mount Ephraim, where he resided, with his wife, who freely consented to return with him. The Levite thus journeyed with his wife, one servant and two asses, carrying such provisions and coverings as were needed on the way. When they came near to Jebus, the servant begged his master to ask for lodging there; the Levite refused, and journeyed on to a town named Gibeah, which they entered at sunset. This town belonged to the Benjaminites, who had become famous for their bestiality and every manner of abomination; besides, they were jealous of the other tribes. Thus, when they perceived the Levite and his family enter their city, they offered them no place to rest, and meditated much ill toward them.

No door being open to him, the Levite sat down in one of the open squares of the city, intending to spend the night there, but soon an old fellow countryman of Mount Ephraim, who was at the time living in Gibeah, seeing the Levite thus exposed to the night, invited him to his house, tendering a generous hospitality. The Levite, and those with him, gladly accepted his kindness, but during the night a party of Benjaminites surrounded the old man's house, and demanded that the Levite be brought to them, having the most infamous

designs upon his person. When the crowd became clamorous, the old man went out to them and sought to appease their desires by offering to them his own virgin daughter, and also the wife, or concubine, of the stranger, if they would but depart and do no violence to his guest. This offer they refused, when, to save himself, the Levite sent his woman among them, and, by an artifice, escaped himself. The poor woman was so seriously abused by the crowd, during the night, that she had barely strength enough left to stagger back to the door where she had found shelter, and there fell dead at the threshold.

When the Levite opened the door in the morning he found the woman lying as she fell, and thinking she was asleep bade her arouse that he might renew his journey. When, however, he found she was dead, without making any complaint, he set her body on one of his asses and hastened to Ephraim. Arriving at home, he resolved to seek revenge against the Benjaminites. Accordingly he cut up the woman into twelve pieces and sent a piece to each of the twelve tribes, together with an account of all that had befallen him at Gibeah.

The report of the Levite aroused all the children of Israel, who vowed that no such deed had been seen since they had come out of Egypt, and they immediately determined to punish the crime as it deserved.

In pursuance of this intent the whole congregation of



THE ISRAELITES MAKING A VOW TO AVENGE THE MURDER OF
LEVITE WOMAN.

Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, assembled together at Mizpeh, and presented themselves before Jehovah, whose aid they implored. This vast throng may be estimated by the fact that there were four hundred thousand fighting men gathered at Mizpeh, besides all the families of Israel, save alone the tribe of Benjamin, which was about to be punished.

When the great army had come together the Levite was brought out and ordered to repeat the particulars of the crime that had been perpetrated, and when he had done so the Israelites assembled made a solemn vow of vengeance and an agreement that they would not separate until the great wrong was atoned.

Provision was now made for an invasion of the country in which the Benjaminites dwelt, the first steps being the appointment by lot of one man out of every ten, whose duty it was to secure food for the army. Messengers were next dispatched to Gibeah, ordering the Benjaminites to deliver up the culprits who had done such a foul deed to the Levite's woman, but they sent back a haughty defiance by the messengers, applauded the acts of their lewd brethren and made ready for battle.

THE GREAT BATTLE OF SHILOH.

Those who remained within the walls of Gibeah were marshalled into a force of sword and spear bearers twenty-six thousand strong, in addition to which there were seven hundred left-handed sling throwers, who could cast a stone, as it is asserted, to a hair's breadth. This was a small army to meet the besiegers, who numbered four hundred thousand, and yet the results of the battle showed that the Benjaminites were much better fighters than the brethren sent against them.

When the eleven tribes gathered together at Shiloh, the ark was set up, Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, being high-priest. Here the oracle was consulted, by which it was decided that Judah should lead the attack against the Benjaminites; and thus, elated by the promise that God was with them, they pitched themselves against Gibeah. Instead of remaining within their defenses, the Benjaminites, in nowise deterred by the immense force which opposed them, rushed out of their city and fell with such impetuosity against their enemies that the army of Israel was put to rout with a loss of 22,000 men, almost equal to the entire fighting force of the Benjaminites.

On the following day the routed army came together again near Shiloh and spent much time weeping before God and asking if they should again go into battle against "Benjamin, my brother." To this inquiry the oracle replied in the affirmative, but the second battle was scarcely less unfortunate than the first, for again Israel was put to rout, with a loss of 18,000.

For a third time the congregation assembled at Shiloh, where they kept a solemn fast and made many burnt-offerings, by which they hoped to win the favor of God, who, it was clear, had not been with them in the two battles. The oracle was now again consulted through Phinehas, who bade them go once more against the Benjaminites, but not as before. By the Lord's direction the army of Israel was divided, one portion of which was sent to lie in ambush behind the city, while the main body was ordered to make the attack in front, being the same stratagem which Joshua had employed so successfully at Ai.

According to orders given by God through the oracle, the main army of Israel went before Gibeah, but turned and fled as the Benjaminites came out, who pursued them some distance. But, as they issued forth, Gibeah was left unprotected, so that the ambushing portion of the army entered and closed the gates, by which the Benjaminites were left on the outside, exposed to the fury



DESTRUCTION OF THE BENJAMINITES BY ISRAEL.

"Thus they inclosed the Benjaminites round about, and chased them, and trode them down."—[JUDGES XX. 43.]

of the immense host. A great slaughter now took place, in which 18,000 of the Benjaminites fell before the city, 5000 more were killed in the retreat, and 2000 more were slain while they were making a last rally at 'Gidom. The very few that escaped wandered about the country for several months, living in caves, while their victorious brethren went through the land burning cities, and putting the inhabitants and their cattle to the sword.

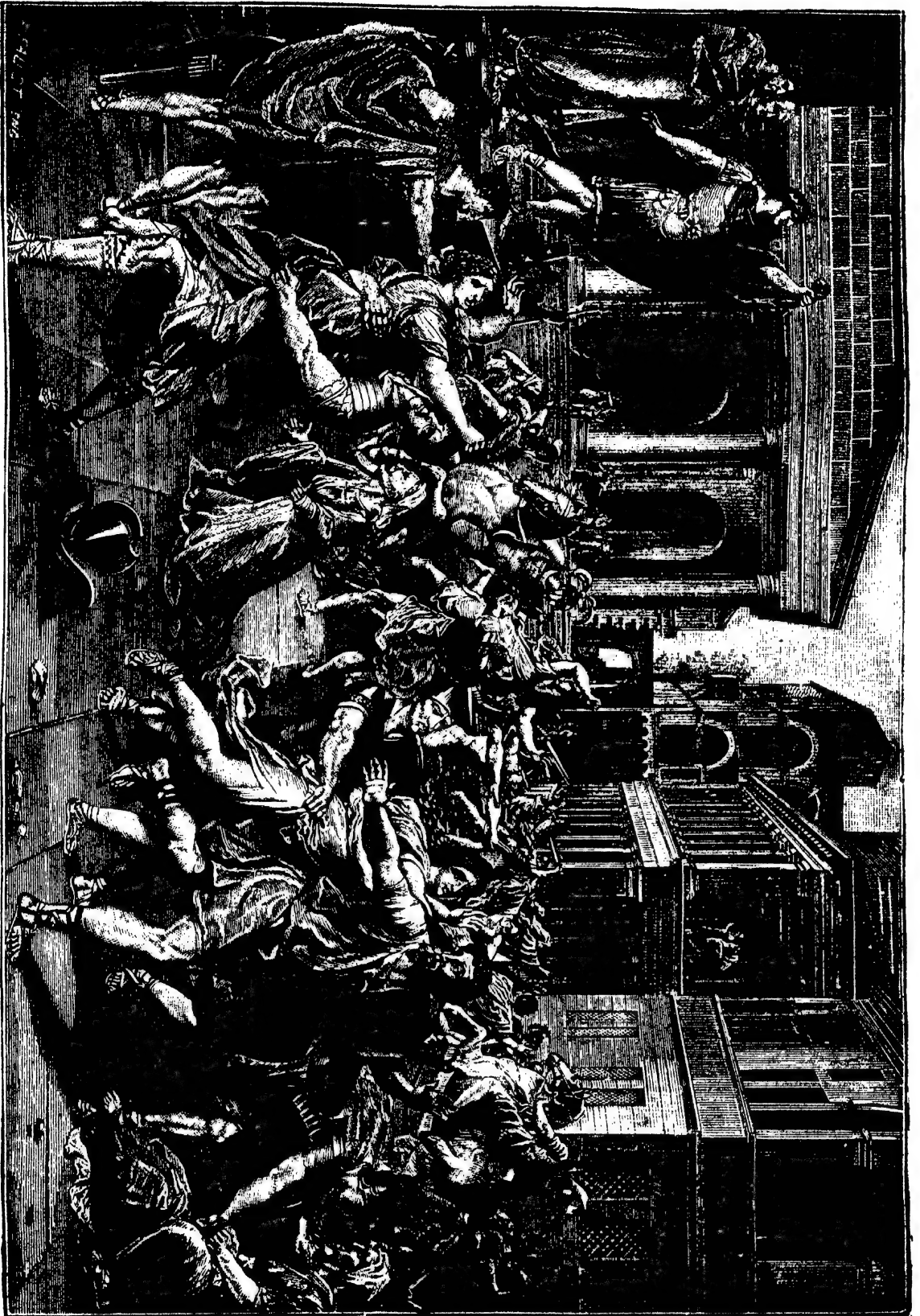
This sack and pillage continued until the tribe of Benjamin was almost obliterated, and would, no doubt, have been entirely extinguished but for the fact that some pity was excited among a few leaders of the eleven tribes, who sought to circumvent the vow that had been made at Mizpeh. It chanced that, on numbering the people, it was found that the men of Jabesh-gilead had not been with the other tribes in the battles, for which failure it was decreed that their city should be destroyed. Accordingly, 12,000 men were sent against it who not only captured the city but destroyed every man therein, together with all the women except four hundred virgins, who were given as wives to as many of the remaining Benjaminites. There were six hundred Benjaminites altogether who escaped the wrath of their brethren, and the two hundred who were not provided with wives from the virgins reserved from the sack of Jabesh-gilead, afterward secured wives by seizing some of the maidens of Shiloh who had come out to dance at a great annual feast.

They afterward set about repairing their cities, and gradually increased, until at the expiration of less than a century they had recovered nearly all their former greatness. It was from out this rehabilitated tribe that Ehud sprang, who became Israel's second judge and the deliverer of his people, as already described.

DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL BY DEBORAH.

After Ehud's successful rebellion the Israelites enjoyed peace and liberty for a period of eighty years, when, having now become rich, they relapsed into such excesses as usually follow the acquisition of wealth by nations.

In northern Palestine there reigned a great prince whose name was Jabin, called king of Hazor. He was chief of the Midianite nation, which had so far recovered from the defeats sustained at the hands of Joshua, in the length of time that had ensued, that it was now considered the strongest in all Palestine. Not less the rich spoil which would follow a defeat of the Israelites, than the satisfaction of avenging the capture of their cities nearly two hundred years before, prompted the Midianites to invade the country now occupied by the Israelites. At the head of Jabin's army was a mighty general named Sisera, who led an immense body of men, supplemented by nine hundred war chariots of iron. This great host swept down on the Hebrews and overcame them in every battle, and for a period of twenty years kept them so badly oppressed that their recuperative power even was almost destroyed, though they still managed to retain their government.



CAPTURE OF MAIDENS AT THE FEAST OF SHILOH, TO BE WIVES OF THE BENJAMINITES.

"And they took them wives, according to the number of them that danced, whom they caught."—JUDGES xxi. 23.

At this time Israel was judged by a prophetess named Deborah, who is reckoned to have been the nation's fourth judge, or ruler. This woman's place of abode was under a palm tree, which received the designation, bestowed by her countrymen, of Deborah's Palm. Here it was her custom to sit and receive the complaints of her people who came for judgment. When Israel sent up a cry to God for deliverance from the Midianites He answered the petition through Deborah, who was commanded to send an inspired message to one Barak, a resident of Naphtali, whom she ordered to assemble ten thousand men at Tabor. Accompanying this order was an assurance which she gave, that if he obeyed the command God would send Sisera to meet him at the river Kishon, where a great victory would be won by the Israelites.



BARAK BEFORE DEBORAH.

Barak, while much impressed by Deborah's message, was too faint-hearted to undertake such an enterprise alone, but believing in the foreknowledge of the woman, replied that he would go up to battle against Sisera only on condition that she would accompany him. She reminded him that should the Israelites prevail, as God had promised, with herself leading the people, he would receive no honor for the victory. This appeal to his ambition had no effect upon Barak, and in the alternative presented, Deborah consented to lead Israel. The army of ten

thousand was now gathered together by levies upon the tribes of Zebulun, Naphtali, Issachar, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, those tribes of the east and south not being engaged.

When Sisera heard of the uprising he assembled his great army at Harosheth, and marched thence to the plain of Jezreel, which is drained by the Kishon, while Barak came down with his ten thousand men from Tabor, to engage the Midianites in battle. It was now that the power of the Lord was made manifest in a wonderful manner: "A tremendous storm of sleet and hail gathered from the east, and burst over the plain, driving full in the face of the Midianites. The rain descended, the four rivulets of Megiddo were swollen to powerful streams, while the torrents of Kishon rose to a flood and the plain became a morass. The chariots and horses of Sisera's army were now turned against him. He became entangled in the swamp so that the torrent of Kishon swept them away in its furious eddies, while in the confusion that followed

the strength of the Midianites was trodden down by their horses, as the fear-stricken animals stamped and plunged in a desperate effort to extricate themselves from the quaking morass and rising streams. Far and wide the vast army fled through the eastern branch of the plain of Endor. There between Tabor and the Little Hermon, a carnage took place long remembered, in which the corpses lay fattening the ground."

In the dreadful rout and devastation, Sisera contrived to escape, by leaving his chariot and fleeing on foot to the tent of Heber, a Kenite. This man was an Arabian Sheikh, a descendant from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. He was dwelling at Kadesh, at the "Oak of the Wanderers," and on friendly terms with both the Israelites and Canaanites. Being the nearest place of shelter to

DEFEAT OF SISERA ON THE PLAINS OF JEZREEL.
"They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera."—JUDGES v. 20.



the battle-ground, Sisera came to his tent, but Heber being absent at the time, his wife, Jael, bade him enter and gave him hospitable entertainment.

Sisera was very tired when he entered the tent, and cast himself at once upon the floor, and Jael covered him with her mantle. After he had slept a little he called for drink, which Jael supplied by giving him buttermilk out of her choicest vessel. Though still extremely fatigued, Sisera would not compose himself to deep sleep until he had exacted from Jael a solemn promise that in no event would she discover him to his enemies, who were now hot in the search. Believing himself secure in the promise given, Sisera fell into a deep slumber. When Jael saw that her guest was soundly sleeping, she seized one of the tent pins and with a hammer drove it at a blow through Sisera's temples, thus killing him upon the instant. It was not long after that the pursuing Israelites came to her tent, when the valorous Jael showed Barak the deed she had done, and claimed the glory of Israel. This deed is made the subject of the *Song of Deborah and Barak*, which ranks amongst the finest efforts of Hebrew poetry.





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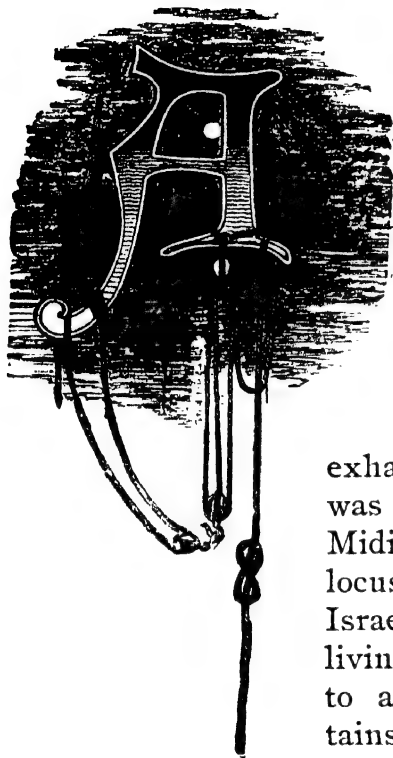
JOHN COLEMAN

JEPHTHAH'S RASH VOW.

"And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child." Judges 11, 34.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STORY OF GIDEON.



AFTER the defeat of Sisera there was peace in Israel for forty years, or until about 1250 B. C., but at the expiration of this time the Israelites returned again to their idolatrous and shameful practices, the miracles which God had wrought not sufficing to prove His protecting care for a greater time than the life of a single generation. The god Baal was publicly set up and worshipped, and many other things done by this wonderfully perverse people in defiance of the Lord's commands, until His patience became again exhausted, and He resolved upon their punishment. This was accomplished by delivering them into the hands of the Midianites and Amalekites, who swarmed upon them "as locusts for multitude." By these, their old enemies, the Israelites were not only subjugated, but their means of living were so completely taken from them that they had to abandon their homes and flee into caves in the mountains, where they subsisted upon the things which chance threw in their way. This oppression lasted for seven

years, during which time a great number died of hardships and starvation.

When God had considered the punishment of His people sufficient, His long-suffering was again exhibited in hearkening to the cries of distress which they sent up to Him. Among the Israelites was one who had not wholly departed from the worship of God, who was already esteemed as "a man of great valor." This soldier was Gideon, a son of Joash, of the tribe of Manasseh, a father himself, having sons also distinguished for bravery. It was he whom God chose should be a deliverer of Israel.

One day, while Gideon was threshing out some corn that had been raised in a place where it escaped the notice of the Midianites, he saw an angel sitting under an oak that was a landmark, by whom he was saluted with the words, "Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Gideon bowed himself and then hastened and brought a kid for an offering. This he killed, and having cut it up brought it in a dish before the angel, whereupon the angel touched the offering and a fire sprang up which devoured it. By this acceptance of his offering Gideon saw that the Lord had some use for his services, and asked what was desired of him. He was now commanded to go in

might and save Israel, for God would help him to prevail over the Midianites. Gideon pleaded his poverty, and the weakness of his people, but the Lord again assured him of His help, and then vanished. Gideon now built an altar at the spot where the sacred presence had appeared, which he called Jehovah-shalom, meaning *Jehovah is our peace*.

At night God again appeared to Gideon, in a dream, and commanded him to take his father's second bullock, of seven years old, and to overthrow the altar and idol of Baal, the fragments of which the Lord ordered him to use in making a fire for burning the bullock as a sacrifice. When he arose in the morning Gideon told ten of his servants what had been commanded of him, and by the aid of these on the following night, secretly, for fear of his father's household and of the men in the city, he carried out the Divine order. When morning again appeared, his deed was discovered, and a cry was at once set up, by the worshippers of Baal, for Gideon's life. Joash, however, influenced no doubt by God, defended his son and said, "Let Baal plead his own cause," and this argument convinced the citizens, who thereupon bestowed upon Gideon the new name of Jerub-baal, which implies, *Let Baal plead*.

When the act of Gideon, and his people's sanction thereof, became known to the Midianites and Amalekites, they prepared at once for war, and mustering their forces went into camp at Jezreel, near the spot where Sisera had been overthrown. Gideon now also prepared for battle by calling together the tribes of Manasseh, Zebulun and Naphtali, who pitched their tents overlooking the Midian hosts in the plain of Esdraelon.

GIDEON'S FLEECE.

In the sight of such an immense army as opposed him, Gideon's faith was somewhat weakened, for he called upon the Lord to give him another sign that he should lead Israel to victory. Thus Gideon gathered a fleece of wool, and laying it upon the ground, told God that if the dews of night should fall heavy and the fleece yet remain dry in the morning, he would consider it a sign that he had been chosen to win the battle. In the morning when Gideon looked at the fleece he found it dry, while all around the ground was wet with dew. Though he promised that this sign should convince him, he was not yet satisfied, and told God that he wanted one more evidence. He would lay the fleece upon the ground another night, and in the morning if it were wet, while all the ground about remained dry, then he should accept it as a token of what God had promised. This second sign was also given, for when Gideon went out and picked up the fleece, he found it so wet that he wrung much water out of it, while all about the ground was as dry as at mid-day. He was now satisfied that he would win the victory, and marched out at the head of thirty-two thousand men to engage the enemy, whose numbers were many times greater.

Before reaching the plain, God bade Gideon to send back a portion of his

army, for, said Jehovah, "The people that are with thee are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." The Lord further told Gideon to say to all those of his army who were afraid to go into battle, to return to their homes. The great fear which possessed Israel is evidenced by the fact that twenty-two thousand acknowledged their cowardice by leaving and going back to their settlements. There now remained ten thousand, the same number that engaged Sisera, but God told Gideon that his army was still too large, as He was going to show the Israelites another miracle by which they would know He was their leader. Then, as the Lord directed, Gideon brought his army to a small stream to drink, and observed that some quenched their thirst by kneeling down and dipping up the water with their hands, while others drank by putting their mouths to the water after the manner of brutes. Of the former there were only three hundred, and these alone God commanded Gideon to take with him into battle, while

should be



GIDEON CONVINCED BY THE FLEECE.

The following night a spy, who had been sent into the Midian camp, came to Gideon and told him that he had overheard one of the

Midianites relating to his comrade a dream, wherein was foretold how Israel should overcome and despoil the Midian army, which seems to have greatly encouraged the little band of three hundred.

Gideon was no less a strategist than a man of valor, for he disposed his small army in a manner well calculated to inspire the enemy with terror. Dividing it into three bands, he ordered that every man be provided with a trumpet, a torch and a large-mouthed pitcher, the two latter to be used to make a dark lantern, instructing them at the same time to make the assault at night and to blow their trumpets at a given signal, then to break their

pitchers that covered the lights, and rush on, shouting, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon."

When the middle watch was set for the night, the little army took up positions on three sides of the Midian camp, and at the word rushed down upon the enemy, first in darkness, blowing their trumpets and shouting their battle-cry. Then breaking their pitchers at a signal, they suddenly appeared as if clothed in flames, brandishing their torches and still blowing the trumpets. The terror which this singular attack produced was equalled only by the miracles God had done. The swords of the Midianites were turned upon themselves as they fled with precipitation down the pass leading to the Jordan.

Those of Gideon's army that had been sent back were now recalled, and they pursued after the retreating Canaanites and engaged them in two other battles, in both of which great numbers of Midianites and Amalekites were slaughtered, making the victory the most important one gained since the time of Joshua.

THE REBELLION OF ABIMELECH.

After their deliverance the Israelites called upon Gideon to serve them as king, an honor which they desired to bestow in recognition of his great services, but he replied to their entreaties, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; *Jehovah shall rule over you.*" Though he resisted this proffer of exaltation, remembering and observing the law of Moses, yet Gideon was not entirely above temptation, and fell into an iniquity by reason of his vanity. Having, by Divine permission, once raised an altar and made an acceptable offering thereon, he was now induced by his own pride to make another of jewels and 1700 shekels of gold which he had taken from the Midianites. This altar was not consecrated to God, but was raised as an oracle, which became a kind of idolatry, for not alone the people, but he also consulted it regularly.

The species of idolatry practised by Gideon was hardly his worst sin, for we are told that he had seventy-one sons, many of whom must have been unlawfully begotten, one of whom, Abimelech, whose mother was a concubine, afterward brought disgrace and great trouble on the Israelites.

Gideon was the fifth judge of his people, and his rule was distinguished by justice and the peace of Israel for forty years. He died at a good old age and was buried in his native city of Ophrah.

Soon after Gideon's death the Israelites, true to their perverse and iniquitous dispositions, abandoned Jehovah and made Baal-berith their national god, which led them into all manner of evil. Though Gideon had refused the crown for himself and sons, Abimelech became ambitious to rule Israel, and to carry his purposes into effect he went among his mother's people, the Shechemites, and urged them to crown him. The specious argument he advanced in support of his claims was that it were better to be ruled by one man than by seventy, and that being himself a Shechemite his people had better accept him

than to allow his brothers—who belonged to another city—to rule over them. So well did he ply this reasoning that his relatives entered into a conspiracy to make him king, and provided him with a band of desperate followers, for which purpose money was taken from the treasury of Baal-berith.

Abimelech, being now placed at the head of an army, marched to his father's house and seized his sixty-nine brothers, and murdered them on a stone altar he had reared. One of his brothers, named Jotham, not being at home when the fratricide was perpetrated, escaped his brother's vengeance, and when he heard what Abimelech had done he went to Mount Gerizim and in an oration to the people recounted the infamy and reproach that had been brought on Israel. He told them how his father had refused the crown for himself and sons, and of the special unworthiness of Abimelech, not only because the Mosaic law forbade the recognition of any other king than Jehovah, but also because Abimelech was the son of a maid-servant, and therefore not entitled to any inheritance.

What effect Jotham's harangue had upon the people we are not told, but he delivered a curse upon his unnatural brother, and also upon the Shechemites, which was not long afterward fulfilled.

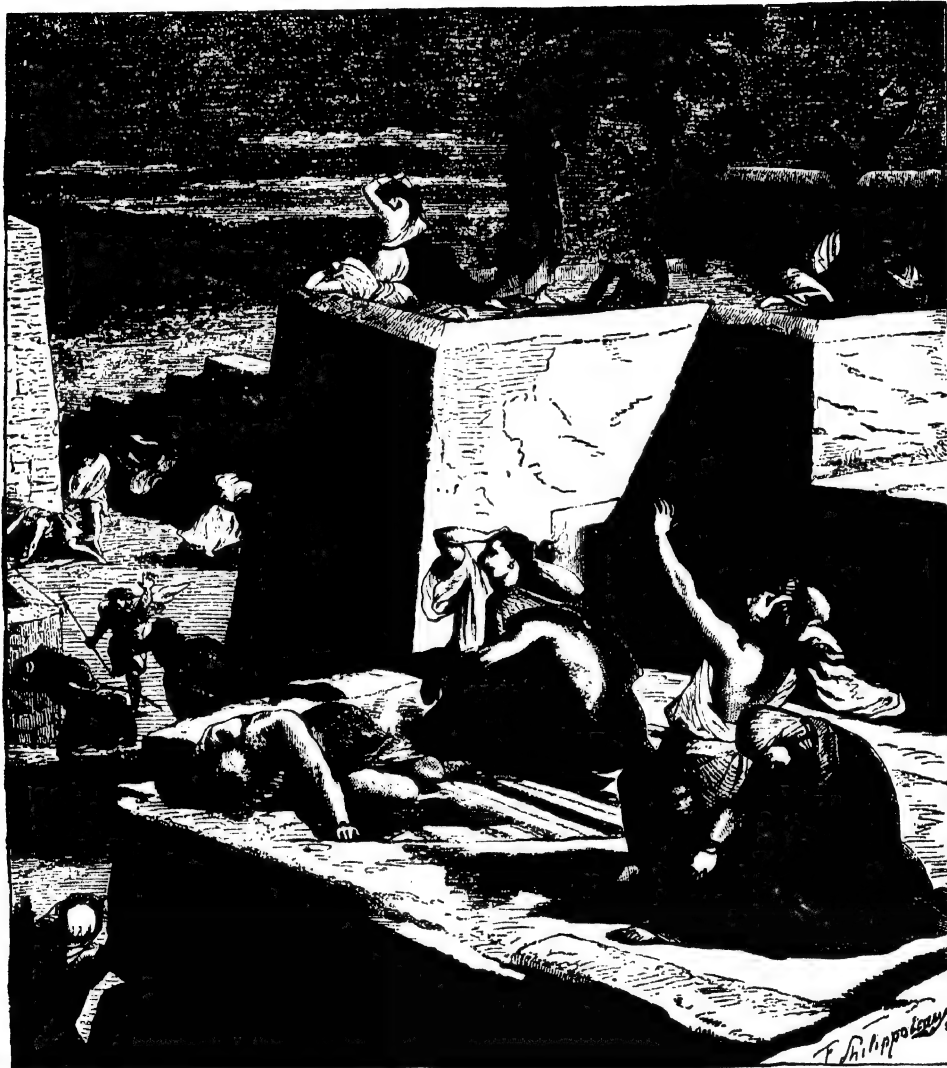
Three years after Abimelech had ascended the throne, God sent a rebellious spirit among the men of Shechem to avenge the murder of Gideon's sons. They not only revolted, but conspired to take his life, and lay in wait for him in all the ways it was usual for him to take, but he knew their purpose and kept himself hidden from them. At length this rebellious spirit had so increased that the rebels found a leader in Gaal, the son of Ebed, who boasted that he would unseat the king. Abimelech, hearing of these threats, managed to collect an army with which he marched to Shechem, and when Gaal and his party came out to engage him the king routed the rebels with great loss.

The victory which Abimelech gained over Gaal did not increase his popularity, for the Amorites now flew to arms to defend the city of Shechem.



IDOL OF BAAL, IN THE HERMON VALLEY.

Their defense of the place did not avail, however, for it was captured and all the inhabitants, except a thousand men and women who had taken refuge in the tower sacred to Baal-berith, were put to the sword. A worse fate was reserved for those in the tower. Abimelech, himself setting the example, ordered his army to collect wood from the neighboring forest which was piled



DESTRUCTION OF SHECHEM BY ABIMELECH.

"And he took the city and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt."—JUDGES ix. 45.

high about the sacred edifice and then set on fire. Thus was destroyed the tower, together with all who had taken refuge therein.

A great uprising of the people in adjacent cities followed the victories of Abimelech, who fell into public odium, though his army still remained true to him. After sacking Shechem, he marched against Thebez, which he

besieged and captured after a brief resistance by its people. There was also a tower in this place, to which a large number of the people fled as a last resort. Abimelech, who must have been a recklessly brave man, instead of intrusting to his soldiers the most dangerous work of approaching and setting fire to the tower, undertook the duty himself, but as he was in the act of applying a burning brand, a woman threw down a piece of millstone upon his head, which broke his skull. In the last agonies of death he bade his attendant dispatch him with his sword, deeming it ignoble to die by the hand of a woman.

Abimelech is regarded as having been the sixth judge of Israel, though the title does not properly belong to him. He was evidently king of a faction, perhaps of a single city, but was never recognized as a ruler by a majority.

THE STORY OF JEPHTHAH AND HIS DAUGHTER.

After Abimelech, the Israelites were at comparative peace for a period of more than one hundred years, though, during this period they had grovelled in all manner of vices, returning to the worship of Baalim, Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, Zidon, Moab, Ammon, and other gods of the Philistines. God's anger was slow to show itself this time, but it came at length. Two nations were sent at the same time against Israel, one on the east and the other on the west, and the Israelites were beaten at every point. Not only were those east of the Jordan brought under subjection by the Philistines, but also the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim, on the west.

For eighteen years the stiff-necked Israelites were humbled and oppressed, as they richly deserved to be. When at length they cried to God, the prophets told them to appeal to their idols, so that, for some time, the Lord refused to aid them. But Israel thoroughly repented and begged God to deliver them only this once. So they broke their idols and began to worship the true God again, by which His aid was once more secured.

The Israelites now gathered their forces in Mizpeh, while the Ammonites, who now opposed them, assembled at Gilead. A decisive battle was to be fought, but Israel had no leader, and in their anxiety to secure a captain, they promised to make the man who would lead them against their enemies the head over all the people of Gilead. In the Israelitish camp was a man who had already proved his valor in battles among neighboring tribes, and toward him all turned their eyes. His name was Jephthah, who was the son of Gilead by a woman of very bad character. When his father died, the poor lad was thrust out by his legitimate brothers, and having nowhere to go he had wandered to the land of Tob. Here he grew up among vicious associates, and became finally the leader of a band of robbers, whose levies of booty, however, were made entirely from the Ammonites.

Jephthah was so highly regarded for his power as a warrior among the Israelites that they besought him to accept the leadership, which he consented

to do only on condition that should he deliver Israel he would be made chief over all Gilead. This promise was not only freely given, but was further affirmed by oath before Jehovah at the sacred place.

JEPHTHAH SACRIFICES HIS DAUGHTER.

After the confirmation of the Israelites' promise Jephthah took command of the army, and sent messengers to the Ammonites to ask of their king why he had made war on Israel. To this message a reply was returned which was scarcely less than a history of the Jewish conquests since the day Moses entered Palestine. The king reminded Jephthah that his people had been driven from their land along the Jordan by the Israelites, and demanded its restoration, for which he had now come to fight. Jephthah sent his messengers again to tell the Ammonites that what Israel possessed God had given them, and as a taunt to their idolatry he submitted that they might take all their god Chemosh would give them, but Israel would retain their own possessions; and he called upon Jehovah to be a judge between them.

Foreseeing the result of his second message, which was equivalent to a challenge, Jephthah mustered all the Israelites that were in Gilead and Manasseh, and bringing them to the rendezvous at Mizpeh, prepared to give battle to his enemies. Before setting out, however, he made a rash vow, whereby he promised if God would give him the victory, that upon his return home he would devote to Jehovah, as a burnt-offering, whatsoever came forth from his door to meet him. The object of such a vow is difficult to discover, since it seems to contemplate the sacrifice of some member of his family, for what else would be most likely to come out of his house to meet him? Yet the sequel proves that the fulfilment of his promise brought upon him the greatest sorrow.

Having recorded his vow, Jephthah marched against the children of Ammon, whom he defeated not only in the first battle, but pursued them until he had captured twenty of their cities, and so broke their power that Israel possessed their lands in peace until the time of the reign of Saul.

Having won the victory and been made judge of all Gilead, Jephthah returned to his city, Mizpeh, and was met by his beautiful daughter, who had just issued forth from his house to greet him. She had heard of her father's renown, and in the pride of her heart, desiring to attest her love and gladness, she came forward dancing and playing upon timbrels, to signalize his triumph and to receive his caresses. She was his only child, and the Biblical account leads us to believe that he lavished upon her all the fondness a doting father is capable of bestowing; what, therefore, must have been his feelings in the remembrance of the rash vow which he had made to Jehovah? In the bitter anguish of his heart he said to his daughter, "Alas! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back." She appears to have fully

comprehended the awful import of his words, for with that wonderful resignation which sustains the trusting child and the devoted followers of God, she made reply: "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon." And she said unto her father, "Let this thing be done for me; let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains and bewail my girlhood, I and my fellows." And he said, "Go."



JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER GOING TO MEET HER VICTORIOUS FATHER.

"And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances."—JUDGES xi. 34.

There are few incidents recorded in the Bible so pathetic as this, nor are there any which exhibit such peaceful resignation to the will of a father, or of God. It is much to be regretted that the name of this noble character is not given, for it deserves perpetuation with that of Miriam, Ruth and Mary.

When the devoted daughter had spent two months with her companions on the mountains, she returned to her father and told him to execute the promise which he had made to Jehovah. We would expect Jephthah to call upon God to set aside the vow, and to relieve him of the monstrous crime of murdering his daughter; or that God would stay his hand at the last moment,

as He did that of Abraham when the knife was uplifted to take the life of his son Isaac; but nothing occurred to prevent the fulfilment of the promise, for Jephthah "did with her according to the vow which he had vowed."

The sacrifice of the loving, dutiful girl having been accomplished, the lamentable circumstance was made memorable by the establishing of a custom whereby on every anniversary of the execution the daughters of Israel went out to some designated spot, and there remained for four days in mourning for Jephthah's only daughter.

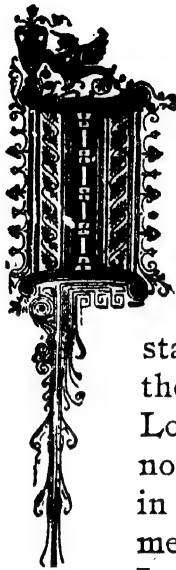
THE REBELLION AGAINST JEPHTHAH.

Although Jephthah had gained a decisive victory, and had been exalted for his prowess, he was not long permitted to enjoy the fruits of his position in peace. The Ephraimites, who were not called to engage against the Ammonites, became jealous, and calling the men of Gilead outcasts of the house of Joseph, threatened to burn Jephthah's house over his head. But Jephthah sent his army against them and put them to rout after a sharp skirmish, and the men of Gilead took possession of the fords of the Jordan over which the Ephraimites had to pass. Here, in order to determine whether those who attempted to cross were Gileadites or Ephraimites, the holders of the fords provided a singular test. Every one who demanded a passage westward was asked, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If the reply was "No," he was required to pronounce the word Shibboleth (meaning *a stream or flood*), but if he should say "Sibboleth," which their singular dialect was certain to make the Ephraimites do, then he was immediately put to death. The loss to the Ephraimites in their uprising against Jephthah was terrible, amounting to forty-two thousand men. Jephthah ruled Israel only six years, when he died and was buried in Mount Gilead.

Of the three judges who came after Jephthah there is little said in the Bible. Their rule extended over a period of twenty-five years, during which time there was comparative peace in Israel, and neither judge did anything to distinguish himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STORY OF SAMSON—HIS BIRTH.



T must be borne in mind, while pursuing the subjects as they are introduced in the Bible narrative, that the events are not recorded in their sequence, but very frequently appear inverted; that is, the latter event often precedes the earlier; so that if this fact is overlooked the reader is liable to become confused in his interpretations. But a greater liability to confusion lies in the general statement which so frequently occurs in the Bible as follows: "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hands of their enemies." This must not be understood as implying that all the twelve tribes of Israel were in sin and became subjugated at the same time. By the apportionment of Joshua, all the land of Canaan, or Palestine, was given to the Israelites, so that the tribes became scattered all over the country. Therefore, the statement just quoted usually has reference to only two or three of the tribes, as we have seen that during the time of Gideon and Jephthah and other judges, only a few of the tribes were involved in wars with the Midianites, Amalekites and Ammonites, the other tribes occupying a district too remote from the scene of conflict to participate. With these facts kept well in mind there will be no obscurity in the manner in which the Bible introduces the subjects of Israel's triumphs and defeats.

In the southern part of Palestine some important events occurred a few years previous to the exploits of Jephthah, chief of which was the institution of idolatry again among the Israelites and their punishment by the Philistines. The story of their subjugation and oppressions is so similar to those several times before related that it is sufficient now to observe that the Philistines were their masters for a period of forty years. By this fact we judge that the sins of the Israelites must have been very great, for the term of their punishment was equal to the life of a generation, by which we infer that God suffered nearly all those who had transgressed His laws to die, and provided a deliverer only for their children.

The deliverer whom the Lord chose to destroy the mastership which the Philistines exercised over the Israelites was a person of lowly birth, but of uncommon power, such as no man ever before or since possessed. Concerning his nativity, we are told that a certain man, whose name was Manoah, and who belonged to the tribe of Danites, had a wife that had never borne him

any children, which was a disgrace in Israel, for the greatest glory of Jewish women was to bear children to their husbands. This poor woman, no doubt, suffered from many taunts hurled at her by her neighbors, and it was possibly for this reason that God chose to comfort her. The Lord appeared to her one day and promised that she should soon bear a son who would, from his birth, begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines; at the same time cautioning her against eating any unclean thing or the drinking of any wine or strong drink. The same abstinence was demanded of the child, who should also never suffer his hair to be shorn.

When the Lord had spoken to Manoah's wife He disappeared, while she hastened to tell the glad news to her husband. Manoah was greatly pleased at the promise that had been made, for he had long wished for a son, but he was very anxious to see the Divine messenger that had appeared to his wife, and prayed that God would manifest Himself to him. Jehovah answered Manoah's prayer by appearing to him in human form, but the good man detected the Divine spirit that dwelt in the presence before him, and urged the angel to accept his hospitality. The messenger thereupon ordered Manoah to make a burnt-offering to God, which he did by killing a kid and making a sacrifice of it. As the flames came up from the altar about the offering, the angel rose upward and disappeared before Manoah's sight.

In due time a child was born, as the Lord had promised, to whom Manoah gave the name Samson, meaning *great joy*, according to some Hebrew scholars, but Josephus declares the word to mean *strong*.

When Samson had grown to man's estate some of the tribes of Israelites were serving under Philistine taskmasters, and their spirits were broken, scarcely hoping for a deliverer, and so corrupted by natural follies and their degraded condition, that they had quite forgotten Jehovah.

The first exhibition of the power which God had given to Samson occurred in the camp of Danites, which was in the central highlands, but what this manifestation was we are not told. Not long afterward he became conscious of his marvellous strength, and, stung to madness by the reproaches heaped upon his people, he began to seek a quarrel with the Philistines. With this end in view he accompanied his parents to a city called Timnath, where the Philistines were holding a great festival. Instead, however, of engaging in a fight, he fell so deeply in love with a Philistine maid, whom he met there, that he besought his parents to procure her for his wife. This request they for a long time refused, because she was not a Hebrew, but his persuasion finally prevailed and he married her.

SAMSON DESTROYS A LION.

On one occasion, while Samson was returning from a visit to his parents to his wife in Timnath, he was attacked by a great lion which meant to devour him; but although Samson had no weapon, he seized the mighty beast,

and with the powerful grip of his arm strangled it; he then threw the carcass into a piece of woods which bordered the highway.



SAMSON TEARING THE LION.

"And behold a young lion roared against him, . . . and he rent him as he would have rent a kid."
—JUDGES xiv. 5, 6.

It was not a great while after Samson's fight with the lion that he was again passing along the same road, when he spied the beast's carcass and per-

ceived that a swarm of bees had made of it a hive, wherein Samson found a quantity of honey, some of which he ate and took also pieces to his wife.

The astonishing strength of this wonderful man gave great concern to the Philistines, who were in constant dread of his enmity; so, under pretense of doing him honors appropriate to his renown, they gave him thirty stout youths for servants, whose real duty, however, was to act as a guard over him. Shortly after his marriage, at a festival given by him, these thirty youths were making merry and disporting themselves in many ways, when Samson said to them: "Come, if I propose you a riddle, and you can expound it in these seven days, I will give you every one a linen shirt and a garment, as the reward of your wisdom." He then propounded the following:

"Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

Being extremely anxious to solve this riddle, but not being able to discover the answer themselves, they went to his wife and tried to induce her to gain the secret from her husband. For some time she refused, but when the thirty threatened to burn her if she did not do their bidding, she prevailed on Samson to tell her the answer, and gave the reply to the thirty. At the end of seven days, when they had come into the presence of Samson, they said to him: "What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?"

Samson knew immediately that his wife had betrayed his secret, and told the young men as much; nevertheless, he did not try to evade his promise, for immediately he went to the city of Askelon, where he killed thirty Philistines, whom he divested of clothing and sent it to the thirty as their reward.

SAMSON TURNS LOOSE THREE HUNDRED FOXES AND SPREADS A FIRE.

His wife's betrayal incensed Samson so greatly that he left Timnath and returned to his father's house, but very soon the old love for his wife revived and he went back to claim her. Upon arriving at Timnath his father-in-law met him with the cruel information that his wife had been given in marriage to one of his thirty groomsmen during his absence, but offered to make amends for the wrong done him by giving him a younger and more beautiful daughter for wife instead.

Samson rejected his father-in-law's proposal, and resolving upon revenge directed against all Philistines, he captured three hundred jackals, which he tied together in pairs by the tails; between each pair he fastened a burning brand, and then turned the whole troop loose in the fields of the Philistines among the standing corn, which was just ready for harvesting. By this means a great fire was spread that burned up not only all the corn, but vineyards and olive trees as well. This wanton act of Samson's was avenged upon his former wife and her relations, whom the Philistines seized and promptly burned. This cruelty further inflamed Samson, who now went against his enemies, and, by the force of his marvellous might, slew many hundreds of them.

in the plains. Having done this, he took refuge on the top of a large rock at Etam, in the territory of Judah.

SAMSON'S EXPLOIT WITH THE JAW-BONE OF AN ASS.

When the Philistines discovered the place of Samson's retreat, they went in a large army into Judah and demanded of the Judahites that they surrender the strong man to them. This demand alarmed the Judahites, for they were not equal in fighting strength to the Philistines, and to avoid a conflict they went to Samson and begged that he would suffer himself to be bound and delivered to the Philistines, else their country would be ravaged for no sin which they had committed. Though Samson was conscious of his power, he permitted himself to be bound with two strong cords, first exacting a promise from the Judahites that they would not side with the Philistines. He was now led captive to the Philistine camp, and as they saw him approaching, apparently in a helpless condition, with shouts of joy they came out to take him. The spirit of God now came upon Samson, who broke his bonds, and with the jaw-bone of an ass, which he found lying at his feet, he sprang upon the Philistines, and thrashing on every side, he killed several thousand and put the rest to flight.

For his success in beating so many of his enemies, Samson refused to give God the credit, becoming so vain as to believe that he had done it by his own unaided exertion. But God now afflicted him with a great thirst, until, in his agony, Samson prayed for pardon, perceiving that nothing could avail him save God's help. Then the Lord caused a spring to burst out of a rock, at which Samson refreshed himself and called the place Jaw-bone, which name it retained in the time of Josephus.

SAMSON CARRIES OFF THE GATES OF A CITY.

After the slaughter at Jaw-bone, Samson went to the city of Gaza, where he put up at a certain inn. The Philistines, learning of his presence there, formed a plan to capture him, which, however, miscarried, as had all their former efforts. They surrounded the city and barred all the great iron gates, besides placing men to guard every avenue, but in the night Samson, having been apprised of their plans, got up from his lodging and ran with such force against the gates that they were thrown down, with the posts and beams that supported them; to show his strength to his enemies he then picked up the gates and carried them upon his shoulders to a neighboring mountain near Hebron. This wonderful act struck such terror into the Philistines that they did not attempt to dispute his way, looking only to their own safety.

HE IS AT LAST OVERCOME BY HIS ENEMIES.

The many favors which Jehovah showed him should have inclined Samson's heart to proper reverence and obedience, but instead, he neglected to



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SAMSON SLAYING THE PHILISTINES.

"And he found a new jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith."—JUDGES xv. 15.

exercise his power always for the glory of God or the good of his people. He at length fell into evil ways, broke even the laws of his own country, and



DELILAH DECEIVING SAMSON.

"He told her all his heart, . . . if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me."—JUDGES xvi. 17.

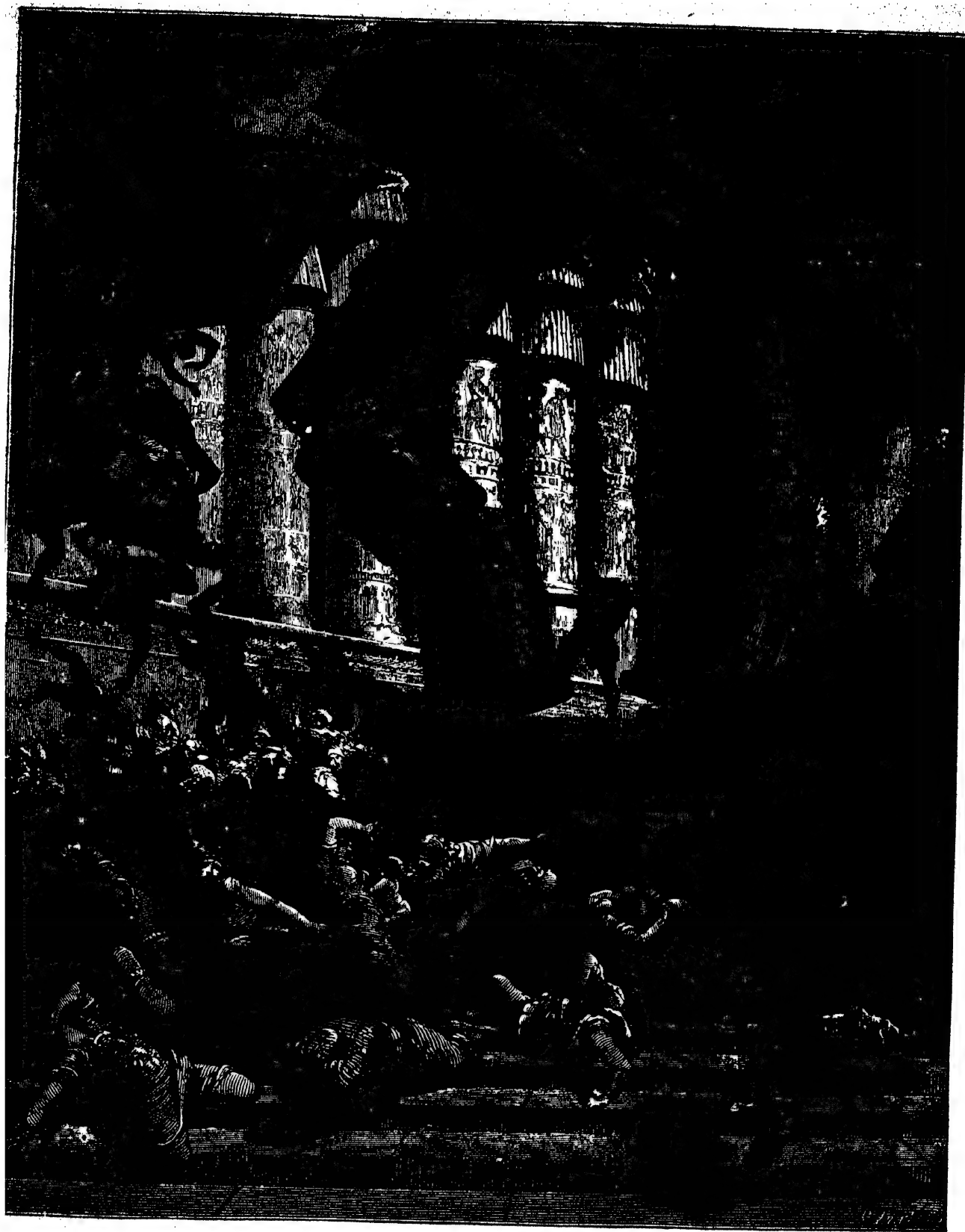
adopted many of the abominable customs of the Philistines, notwithstanding they had always been his enemies.

It was no doubt sinful in Samson in taking his first wife from among the Philistines, as circumstances proved the folly of the act; but experience failed to make him any wiser, for he fell in love with another Philistine woman, one, too, of the lowest character, who at length compassed his downfall. Her name was Delilah, and as the Bible represents her as having been a most beautiful woman, it is not improbable that, despite her loose morals, she may have occupied a high social position among her people. Her qualities of beauty and accomplishments exercised so potent an influence upon Samson that he became plastic in her hands, moving him as she chose. The Philistines, observing this, bribed Delilah to obtain from him the secret of his strength and betray it to them. She seems to have cared very little for her Herculean lover, for she entered heartily into the scheme proposed. When, therefore, a suitable occasion was presented, she urged Samson to tell her in what charm lay his wonderful strength. In order to delude her, he replied that if he were bound with seven withes of a certain green vine his strength would be as that of other men. She hastened to tell the Philistines, who stationed a number of soldiers in ambush, and there waited until Delilah plied him with strong drink till he fell asleep. The soldiers then bound him as he had prescribed. She now awakened him, as if in great alarm, by shouting in his ear that the people were upon him. He roused up in a maudlin condition and broke the withes as if they had been threads.

When her first artifice failed Delilah reproached Samson for his want of confidence, and for having deluded her, and then renewed her persuasions until he told her that if she would bind him with seven cords his strength would depart. Again she tried to betray him to the Philistines, but with no better success than before. Pretending now to be sorely hurt by his deception, and withal charging him with entertaining no love for her, she at length obtained his confidence, and he told her truly that God had taken care of him, and "thence it is that I suffer my hair to grow, God having charged me never to poll my head, and thence my strength is according to the increase and continuance of my hair." He further said that if she would braid his hair and then cut it off his strength would be no greater than that of any other man. Believing that he spoke the truth, she lulled him to sleep with his head resting in her lap, and then braiding his hair clipped it from his head. When she now awakened him the soldiers rushed in and easily bound him, for he had lost his strength, and when taken to the place of judgment his eyes were put out, and he was afterward led about the streets an object of public derision.

PULLING DOWN THE TEMPLE OF DAGON.

But the Philistines continued their cruel exhibition too long, for Samson's hair grew out again, and with its increase all his former strength returned. When his power had become as great as before there was a great public festival given, which was attended by the most eminent Philistines in the



SAMSON PUSHING DOWN THE PILLARS.

"And he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell."—JUDGES xvi. 30.

CHAPTER XV.

THE STORY OF NAOMI AND RUTH.

Ruth.



PON the death of Samson he was succeeded by Eli (who had before been acting as high-priest), as judge of Israel, whose rule was not distinguished for any great wisdom, and who is chiefly remembered in Jewish history by reason of the iniquity and terrible fate of his two sons. But during Eli's administration a famine prevailed throughout the land, which bore with such severity upon the people that a large number were forced to emigrate to save themselves from

starvation. Among those who thus changed their abode was a man named Elimelech, who lived in Bethlehem with his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Chilion and Mahlon. He went to the land of Moab, where his affairs were all prosperous, and after a little while he married his sons to two Moabitish maidens, named Orpah and Ruth.

Elimelech continued to prosper in the land of Moab for a period of ten years, when he fell sick and died, leaving the care of his estate to his two sons. But it was only a little while after his death before the two sons also died, which double misfortune so deeply distressed Naomi that she decided to return to Bethlehem, where many of her friends still lived, especially as the famine had now disappeared and the harvests there were again abundant.

Though Elimelech had greatly prospered while in the land of Moab, he must have left behind him only a small estate, for when Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem her possessions were so small that it was with much difficulty she managed to subsist. When she was upon the point of starting, both Orpah and Ruth desired greatly to accompany her, having become so much attached to her that they were quite ready to leave their own friends and kindred and go to a strange land, esteeming the companionship of their good mother-in-law above all other attachments. This love greatly affected Naomi, but she, nevertheless, sought to persuade her daughters-in-law against their expressed determination, reminding them of the uncertainty which such a trip might entail: that, perhaps, her old friends were now dead and her early acquaintances moved away or had forgotten her; besides, she urged, it were better for them to remain among their kinsmen rather than trust themselves upon a journey from whence they might never return. This argument finally persuaded Orpah to remain, but Ruth replied, out of the fervor of her great

love: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, which she no doubt secretly desired, the two journeyed forward together and in due time



RUTH AND NAOMI.

"Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee."—RUTH i. 16.

arrived at Bethlehem. When her old friends, of whom many yet remained in the town, saw her, they greeted her with much affection, saying, "Is this Naomi?" To which she replied, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara (meaning, *She who weeps or laments*), for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty."

Naomi returned to Bethlehem at the beginning of harvest time, and having nothing upon which to feed herself, being so extremely poor, she sent Ruth to glean after the reapers in the fields of a rich man named Boaz, who was a

kinsman of Elimelech. It was customary in Judah to allow poor people to follow the harvesters, and gather up the few straws of grain which were left on the ground after the reapers had passed over it. This was called gleaning. While Ruth was thus engaged picking up the stray straws Boaz came out into the field, and seeing the girl, who was very beautiful, inquired of his workmen what damsel it was; to which they replied that it was a Moabitish girl who had come into Bethlehem with Naomi, and had in the morning asked of them permission to glean.

Boaz now approached and told her not to go into any other field to glean, but to continue after his harvesters and with his maidens, and when she was thirsty to drink from the vessels used by his young men. This kindness, so unexpected, because the poor of Judah were not generally treated with such compassion, Ruth did not understand, and she asked why she, being a stranger to him, should find so much grace in his eyes. Then Boaz answered that he had been told of her love for Naomi, and of how she had left her kinsmen to follow her mother-in-law into a strange land, trusting to the Lord for shelter. When Ruth had expressed her thanks, Boaz went among his reapers and told them to allow the damsel to gather from among the sheaves, so that she might take away all the grain she wanted, and in addition to this he gave her food in plenty.



RUTH GLEANING IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ.

"Then said Boaz unto Ruth, . . . Go not to glean in another field, . . . but abide here fast by my maidens."—RUTH ii. 8.

In the evening Ruth returned to Naomi, carrying with her an ephah—equal to one bushel and a half—of threshed barley, and related all that had befallen her in the field of Boaz. At the mention of this name, Naomi told Ruth that he was a near kinsman, whose kindness was very great, since he had not forgotten the living and the dead.

In accordance with Boaz's wish, Ruth continued gleaning in the same field until the end of the harvest, taking away each day all the grain she could carry. When at length threshing time came, Ruth, following the advice of Naomi, went in the night to a barn where Boaz was sleeping, and, uncovering his feet, lay down by him. About midnight Boaz was awakened, and discovering a woman lying at his feet, was alarmed, and cried out, "Who art thou?" She answered him with becoming meekness, telling him of her kinship to him and desiring to be covered with his skirts.

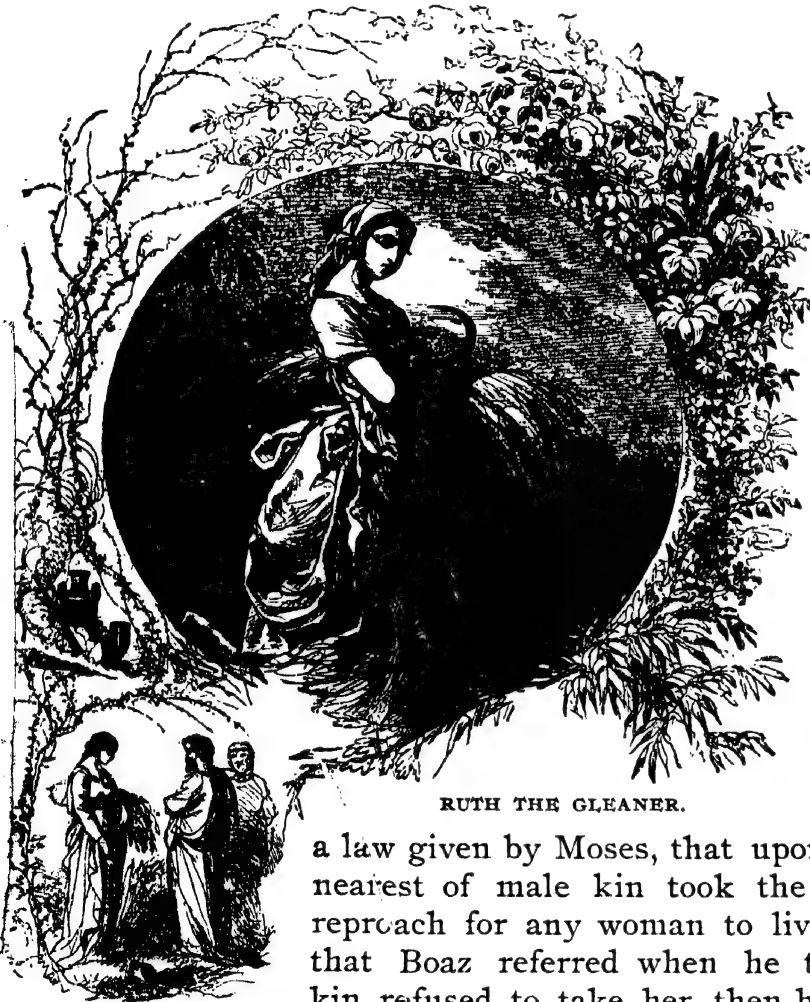
The humility and fidelity of Ruth greatly increased Boaz's respect for her, who now told the girl that he would be her protector, calling her his "daughter," to assure her of his good intentions; saying, also, "I will do to thee all that thou requirest, for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman." He then reminded her that there were kinsmen nearer to her than himself, whom he would ask to do to her a kinsman's part; but if they refused, he would then himself do the part of a kinsman.

It was a custom among the Israelites, according to

a law given by Moses, that upon the death of a husband his nearest of male kin took the widow for wife, for it was a reproach for any woman to live single. It was to this law that Boaz referred when he told Ruth if her nearest of kin refused to take her, then he would himself espouse her.

When the interview with Boaz terminated, he gave Ruth six measures of barley and sent her again to Naomi, who, being apprised of all that had passed between them, bade her daughter-in-law to await the fulfilment of what had been promised, assuring her that Boaz would not rest until he had made good all his assurances.

Early in the morning Boaz went up to the gate of the city and there sat down, that he might talk with any of the kinsmen who should pass in or out. As each came by Boaz called to him and urged him to sit down, until all the



RUTH THE GLEANER.

near kinsmen of Naomi had been assembled about him; he next called ten elders of the city, whom he also bade to sit by him, and when the party was complete Boaz told the kinsmen that Naomi had returned to Bethlehem after selling a parcel of land which was Elimelech's, which he called upon them to redeem, as next of kin, but in case they refused to redeem it, then, as second of kin, he would do so himself. This was also according to a custom long practised by the Israelites, by which the inheritance of one generation was transmitted intact, or increased, to another.

When Boaz had given these kinsmen notice to redeem the land, or renounce their claim in his favor, they all replied that they could not make the redemption without sacrificing some of their own inheritance. This was the reply which it was evident Boaz desired them to make, for all his actions prove that he was deeply in love with Ruth from the time he first saw her gleaning in his field. He now called all the elders and people to witness that he would redeem all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's of the land of Naomi, and with this promise he also claimed,

of right, the beautiful Ruth, by whom he would perpetuate the inheritance of the two sons of Naomi. So Boaz espoused Ruth before all the people, and he took both her and Naomi to his house, where he cared for them.

In due course of time Ruth bore Boaz a son, which Naomi took to her own bosom and became a nurse to it. The neighbors gave to this child the name of Obed, which signifies *servant*, as it was prophesied that he should become a servant of the Lord. Obed became, as we shall hereafter see, the father of Jesse, who was in turn the father of David, through whom the descent is traced to Jesus Christ.

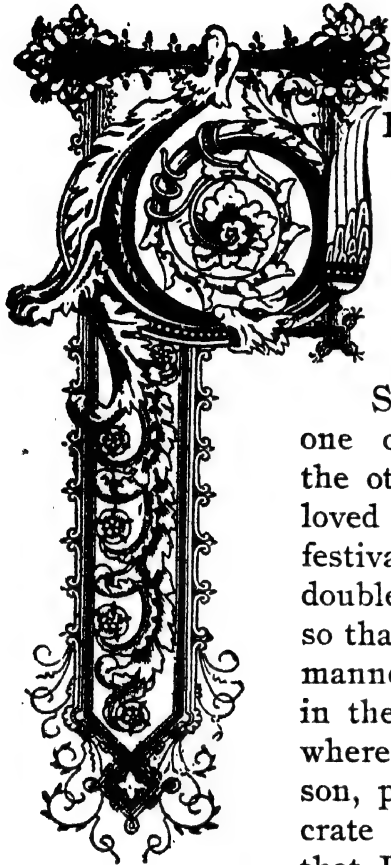


THE GLEANERS.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STORY OF SAMUEL, THE FIRST PROPHET.

1 *Samuel.*



THE story of Samuel, the successor of Eli, the fifteenth and last judge of Israel, and the first in the succession of prophets, is one of the most interesting related in the Bible. His descent is uncertain, because, while the Bible tells us that his father was an Ephraimite, his genealogy shows him to have been a descendant of a Levite of the family of Kohathites.

Samuel's father, Elkanah, we are told, had two wives, one of whom, Peninnah, bore him several children, while the other, Hannah, was barren; but for all this Elkanah loved her better than he did Peninnah, and at the annual festivals given at the sacrifices at Shiloh, he allowed her a double portion. This preference excited Peninnah's jealousy, so that she taunted Hannah for her barrenness and in every manner possible made her condition intolerable. At length in the fulness of her sorrow Hannah went to the Tabernacle, where Eli was high-priest, and fell to praying to God for a son, promising that if one were given her she would consecrate him to the Lord. She continued so long at prayer that Eli thought she was disordered by drink, and tried to drive her away, but she then told him her troubles and so gained his pity that he bade her to be of good cheer for God would send her children.

The consoling words of Eli greatly encouraged Hannah, who returned to her husband in gladness, and within a year she bore a son whom she named Samuel, signifying *Asked of God*. When she next went to the Tabernacle to offer sacrifices she remembered her promise and accordingly dedicated Samuel to God, that he might become a prophet. He was therefore brought up in the Temple, his hair was left uncut and his drink was nothing but water, as was the custom in the raising up of those appointed for the priesthood.

Hannah bore two other sons and three daughters, and she was abundantly blessed by God for keeping her promise.

When Samuel was twelve years of age he was ready to begin prophesying, so God called to him while he was asleep, but believing it was the voice of Eli he got up hastily and went to the high-priest, to know what was wanted of him. Eli told him he had not called, so Samuel lay down again, but was

soon aroused by a second call, when, returning again to Eli to know what was wanted, he was a second and even a third time told that no one had called. But Eli perceived that some one had spoken, and told Samuel that if he should hear the voice again it was surely God who spoke, and ordered him to answer. So God called to him again, and Samuel answered Him, "Here am I." Then the Lord told him to prophesy of the evils that were to come upon the Israelites, and how Eli's sons would be slain and the priesthood transferred to the family of Eleazar. All the things which God told him he repeated to Eli at the latter's request, for he did not like to be the bearer of such ill news to the high-priest.

The glory of Samuel now spread rapidly, for all the prophecies that he made came to pass in due season, and he was hailed by all the Jews as their true prophet.

It was directly after the beginning of the prophesying of Samuel that the Philistines went to war against the Israelites, who had incurred God's anger by reason of their idolatry and other transgressions. Eli's two sons made themselves specially obnoxious by worshipping publicly the idol Ashtaroth, and committing other equally great sins, which Eli took no steps to punish, holding them so highly in his favor that he preferred his wicked sons to the love of God.

The next day after the Philistines had made their camp at Aphek, the Israelites engaged them in battle, but were defeated with a loss of four thousand men. After this defeat the Hebrews became afraid of their enemies, who were pressing them sorely. At length the sons of Eli, and other elders in Israel, thought they might overcome the Philistines by bringing the ark and setting it in their midst during battle. They remembered the power God had shown in protecting those who had followed the ark, and how His holy presence was never removed from it, but they did not reflect that it was their profanation of the ark and their manifold transgressions against God which were the cause of the punishment that was now being sent upon them.

But as they had wished, the ark was brought from the temple and carried before the Israelitish host. At sight of the ark the Philistines were greatly concerned, for they had heard of the miracles that had been performed by its presence; but nevertheless they fell upon the Israelites with the fury of despair, killing thirty thousand, and routing the rest, and also captured the



RUINS OF SHILOH AS THEY APPEAR TO DAY.

ark, which they proudly bore away. Among the Israelites who were slain that day were the two wicked sons of Eli, as Samuel had predicted.

A certain young Benjaminite was deputed to act as messenger to carry the news of the defeat to Shiloh, which was the place in which Eli sat in judgment, and where the ark was kept before it was taken into battle. As the people of Shiloh heard, through the messenger, what had happened, they filled the city with their lamentations. Eli, who sat upon a high throne by one of the gates, hearing the cry of mourning, thought some ill thing had happened to his family, and to know the facts he sent for the messenger. When he heard that his sons were slain he did not show any grief, having been already apprised, by the prophecy of Samuel, of how they should end their days; but when he was told that the ark was captured and taken away, the news so distressed him that he fell from his seat upon the stones below and broke his neck. Eli was a very large man, and ninety-eight years of age at the time of his death, and had been judge for forty years.

On the same day that the fatal accident happened to Eli, the wife of his son Phinehas, being unable to support the information of her husband's death, was brought to bed by the excitement, where she gave birth to a seven-months' child, and died immediately after the pangs of labor had passed. This child lived and received the name of Ichabod, which means *disgrace*, because of the disgrace which Israel had suffered at this time.

HOW THE PHILISTINES SUFFERED WHILE POSSESSING THE ARK.

When the Philistines bore away the ark of Israel they took it to their temple in Ashdod, and set it up beside their own god, which was called Dagon. This idol was made to resemble a man above the middle and a fish below, to personify its rulership over land and water. In the morning, when the Philistines came to worship, what was their surprise to find poor Dagon lying prostrate, as if in attitude of supplication before the ark. Though they restored him time and again to his base, every morning they found him lying prone before the ark, and finally sadly disordered, his head and hands having been broken off.

The misfortunes of Dagon failed to prove to the Philistines their iniquity in retaining the ark, so God sent a terrible plague among them, by which the people died in great torment, while myriads of mice sprang out of the earth and destroyed all the fruits and plants, until their dreadful afflictions at last admonished the Philistines that their disasters were due to the ark, and they now clamored for its removal from Ashdod. Askelon was a neighboring city in which the people were persuaded that the sufferings of their neighbors at Ashdod were due to natural causes, and they therefore desired that the ark be brought to them, which was accordingly done.

But hardly had the ark rested in Askelon, when the people of that place became afflicted with calamities similar to those that had so grievously punished

the people of Ashdod. It was therefore speedily removed again to another city, and was thus carried to five different cities, in each of which the plagues spread, until the Philistines were convinced it was the ark that bred the diseases which appeared and disappeared with its coming and going.

HOW THE PHILISTINES RETURNED THE ARK.

The disposition of the ark became now so serious a matter that the governors of the five principal Philistine cities, Gath, Ekron, Askelon, Gaza and Ashdod, met in solemn council to consider what was best to be done. In this council there were some who advocated sending the ark immediately away, while others declared that the visitations from which they had suffered were not due to the ark, as many believed, for if God had so much regard for it, He

would not have suffered it to fall into their hands; and they were therefore in favor of retaining it.

But there was a third party who said that it was neither right to send the ark away nor retain it, but advocated the dedication of five golden images, one for each city, as a thank-offering to God for having spared their lives from the distempers spread among them. They also desired that five golden mice might be made, which they advised the governors to have placed in a bag and laid upon the ark. Also that



POOL, BEFORE ASKELON—STILL EXISTING.

a new cart be made, to which a yoke of milch-kine should be attached, but that the calves be kept from following after their dams, and driven to the spot where three roads met. Upon reaching such a place it was recommended that the cows be allowed to select their own way. If the cows should go toward the Hebrews it would be taken as a proof that the ark had been the cause of their misfortunes, but should they go either of the other ways they recommended that the ark be taken back to their cities, since it might be accepted as an evidence that the plagues were in no wise the result of the ark's presence. The suggestions of these latter advocates found such general sanction that they were at once put into effect.

The kine were harnessed to the ark and driven to where three ways met, when, being left to select their own route, they went directly toward the Israelites until they came to a village in Judah called Bethshemesh, the Philistines following in the mean time to see what would befall their enterprise. When the ark came in sight of the village all the people of the country left off working and came flocking out to greet it and express their joy. They ran

to the cart, and taking the ark and the vessels containing the images and golden mice, set them upon a rock that stood in the plain. Here now they killed the cows and burned the cart as a splendid sacrifice to God, which, the Philistines seeing, they turned back, satisfied in their own minds that the ark was Israel's and a plague to other people.

While the people about Bethshemesh were making the burnt offering, seventy men, who were participating at the sacrifice, looked into the ark in a profane manner, possibly coveting the golden images, and were instantly struck dead by the hand of God. The Bible tells us that there were smitten at this time fifty thousand, three-score and ten men, but in a foot-note in Josephus' works is the following:

"These seventy men, being not so much as Levites, touched the ark in a rash or profane manner, and were slain by the hand of God for such their rashness and profaneness, according to the Divine threatenings.—Numb. iv. 15, 20; but how our other copies came to add such an incredible number as fifty thousand in this one town or small city, I know not." See Dr. Wall's critical notes on 1 Sam. vi. 19.

DELIVERANCE OF THE ISRAELITES THROUGH SAMUEL'S PRAYERS.

Upon recovering the ark, the Israelites became suddenly conscious of their iniquities, and showed such a contrite spirit that Samuel seized the occasion to move their hearts yet stronger toward God. He reminded them that the source of all their discomfitures was in their own wickedness, and assured them that if they really desired to become free from the Philistine yoke, they could obtain their wish by being righteous and casting sin out of their souls, promising himself as surety for their deliverance if they would but turn to God.

Samuel's speech greatly pleased the Israelites, who gave their promise to resign themselves to the will of God, whereupon Samuel assembled them together at Mizpeh (*watch-tower*), where they drew water and poured it out as a libation to Jehovah, and, after fasting all day, betook themselves to praying. In the midst of their prayers, the Israelites were set upon by the Philistines, who had observed the great gathering, and who took them by surprise. Being wholly unarmed, as well as intimidated by their enemies, the Israelites scattered and fled in terror, coming to Samuel with woeful forebodings on their lips, and begging him to intercede with God in their behalf.

Samuel bade his people to be of good cheer, since God would assuredly assist them according to His promises. So he took a sucking lamb and sacrificed it for the multitude, at the same time praying God to hold His protecting hand over them when they should fight with the Philistines. While this sacrifice was being made, the Philistines drew near in battle array against the unarmed Israelites; but before they had begun an attack, God sent a terrible earthquake, which split the earth asunder in many chasms, into which thousands of the Philistines were hurled, while heavy thunder and blinding lightning caused those who escaped being engulfed to drop their weapons and flee

in confusion. The Israelites followed after them, seizing the weapons that had been dropped, with which they killed many others, and drove the remainder as far as Bethcar (*house of lambs*). This great victory, secured by the direct aid of God, was duly celebrated by praises, and a memorial stone was set up as a remembrance of the Philistines' flight, which was called Eben-ezer (*the Stone of Power*).

Soon after this battle, Samuel headed an expedition into the enemies' country, which was so successful that, besides slaying great numbers of the Philistines, he humbled the others, and dispossessed them of all the lands they had acquired from the Jews by conquest, and gave peace to all of Palestine, during the remaining days of his rulership. In recognition of the services of Samuel, he was honored by appointment to the office of Judge of Israel, in which position he acted with great justice and became almost an oracle to the people of neighboring countries. His life would have been doubtless a happy one throughout but for the misconduct of his sons, who will be mentioned again hereafter, as well as the acts of Samuel also.

THE ISRAELITES DEMAND A KING.

Samuel ruled Israel somewhat differently from the administration of former judges, for, while he held his personal court at Ramah, he appointed a court in every city and district, which he attended twice every year. But after a time he grew too old to conveniently make these semi-annual circuits, and to relieve himself from the labor, he committed the government to the care of his two sons, the elder of whom was called Joel, and the younger Abiah.

He sent one to the city of Bethel and the other to Beersheba, and made each district distinct and answerable to the judgment of the respective sons. They had not long held the reins of government, however, before they fell into extravagances that required expenditures greater than their proper incomes could provide, and, as a consequence, they became corrupt and venal; they perverted justice for gifts and bribes, and thus oppressed the people to provide luxuries for themselves, until at length the masses could endure their shameless conduct no longer. Taking counsel therefore among the elders, some of the Israelites brought their complaints to Samuel, whom they begged to relieve them of their oppressions by appointing a king to reign over them and manage their affairs after the manner of the neighboring Macedonian kings.

Samuel was much distressed by the urgent request of the people, and for many nights took no rest for troubling over the affairs which had been brought to his attention. He, like Gideon, would have told the people that Jehovah should alone rule Israel, but he knew that their complaints were well founded and therefore such advice would have by no means satisfied them.

While tormented thus in mind, and resolving what he should do, Samuel was called by God, who bade him not despair since it was not he but Himself whom the Israelites complained of; God further told him that the people should

receive fitting punishment for their grumblings and desire for a king. "So I command thee," says the Lord, "to ordain them such a one as I shall name beforehand to be their king, when thou hast first described what mischiefs kingly government will bring upon them, and openly testified before them into what a great change of affairs they are hastening."

In the morning, Samuel called the Jews together, and after confessing to them that he would ordain a king, told them of the adversities they would fall into by reason of such a ruler; showing how, to sustain the government and the condition befitting their dignity and exaltation, such kings would draft many people into their service, some of whom would be chariot-drivers, others archers, guards, runners-before, servants, husbandmen, diggers in the field; and equal servitude would be imposed upon the daughters of Israel. But, besides this, he assured them that their kings would take away the people's possessions to bestow upon the eunuchs at court, and take the cattle and give them to their servants; and, in short, the people would be scarcely superior to slaves. He further told them that in time they would sorely repent having asked for a king, and would cry to God for deliverance, but that the Lord would not hearken to their prayers, rather permitting them to suffer the punishment which their evil conduct deserved.

But to Samuel's kindly advice and his predictions of what would come to pass the people turned a deaf ear, except to admonish him against anticipating evils, which they did not believe would follow the ordination of a king. So when he saw the Israelites fully determined, Samuel ordered them all to return to their several homes, promising to send them a king as soon as he should know, from God, whom to appoint.

SAUL IS ORDAINED KING BY SAMUEL.

In the city of Gibeah, which was not many leagues distant from Ramah, there lived a man named Saul, who was the son of Kish, a wealthy and powerful Benjaminite, who kept many flocks and who brought up his family to pastoral pursuits. Saul, at the time of which I write, about 1000 B. C., was perhaps forty years of age, for he had grown sons, yet he continued in the service of his father, as was the custom in Israel.

On an occasion some very fine she-asses, which Kish valued more than all his other live-stock, broke out of the pasture where they were usually kept and wandered away, none knew whither. Learning this fact Kish sent his son Saul, accompanied by a single servant, in search of them. The two set out and travelled nearly three days without discovering any traces of the strayed asses, which so discouraged Saul that he proposed to return, lest his father's solicitude for his long absence be greater than for the lost animals, but the servant replied that they were now near the city of Ramah, where dwelt a most renowned prophet, and he proposed that they go to this man and ask him the place where they might find the asses. Saul was in no wise averse

to this suggestion, but he remembered that his money was spent, and he therefore had no means to pay the seer (prophet) for the information sought. The servant, however, had the fourth of a shekel and offered to give this, whereupon the two went on.

When Saul and his servant reached the suburbs of Ramah, they met some maidens that were going out of the gates to fetch water, and these they asked

for directions to the prophet's house. The maidens showed them, and also bade the two to hasten quickly as the prophet was about to sit down to a feast with many invited guests.

It so happened that Samuel had brought seventy-one (according to Josephus) of the elders of Israel to feast with him on that day, for the purpose of consulting with them concerning the king whom God had promised to send at the hour they were to eat. But at the time Saul entered the gates Samuel was sitting on his house-top watching for the approach of the Benjamite who was to be ordained as the Lord had declared. As he saw the young man coming, Samuel retired from the house-top and met him,



SAUL, ANOINTED KING BY SAMUEL.

"Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him."—I SAM. x. i.

and at that moment God revealed to him that the stranger was he who should be ruler of Israel. But Saul did not know who it was that had greeted him, for he inquired again the way to the prophet's house. Samuel now enlightened him, and the two retired into the house, where they presently sat down to supper. But before they had begun to sup Samuel told Saul that the asses were found and he should come up with them presently, but that greater news was yet in store for him, for he had been chosen king of Israel. Saul knew

not how to regard this speech of Samuel's, whether it were in jest, to make sport of him before the other guests, or in earnest; he therefore asked why he should be made the object of laughter. When, however, Saul perceived that Samuel was in earnest, he betrayed much modesty by declaring himself too inconsiderable to hope for such great things; "besides," says he, "I am of a tribe too small to have kings made out of it, and of a family smaller than several other families."

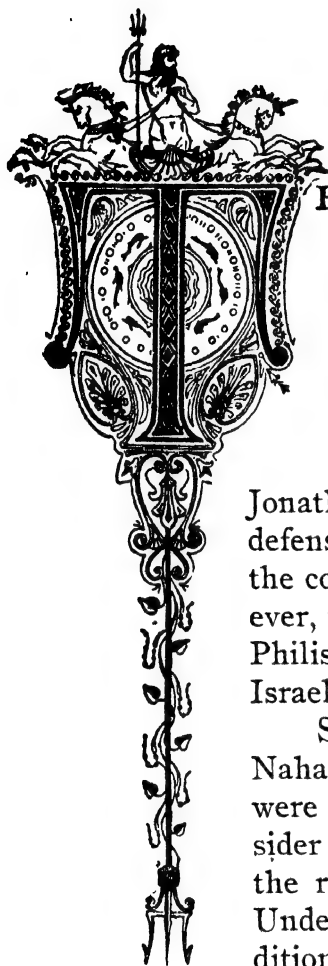
Saul remained all night with Samuel, and in the morning when he departed the prophet went a distance with him. When they had come to a retired spot Saul was bidden to send his servant on apace, that no one might be near; and when they were thus alone, Samuel took a vessel of oil with which he anointed Saul king, as the Lord had prescribed. Samuel then told him how he would soon meet three men who would inform him where his asses might be found; then, after going as far as Gabatha, he would overtake a company of prophets, whereupon he would be seized by the Divine spirit and begin prophesying, until all the people would wonder.

The choice of the people being declared, Saul was commanded to assume the office of king; but when the people sought for him to proclaim him their sovereign he had disappeared and could not for some time be found. So great was the diffidence of his nature that he had hidden himself, and had finally to be drawn from the place of his concealment. When he was brought up the people saw that he was of majestic size, being a shoulder taller than any of his people, and they cried with one voice, "God save the king!"

Being now duly ordained ruler of Israel, Saul returned to his home in ~~Gibeah~~, but not until Samuel had given a new code of laws to the Israelites, to which even the king was made subject, and laid it in the sanctuary for the guidance of all that should come after. He also prophesied the things which should come to pass during the rulership of Saul. The multitude was now dismissed, but many went away muttering their dissatisfaction at the choice of Saul for king, for jealousies were as common in those days as they are in these.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE REIGN OF SAUL—HIS FIRST BATTLE.



HERE is little in the Bible concerning Saul until he had ruled two years; as, indeed, there was nothing of material interest to describe during this time, because all the country about was at peace; but now the Philistines began to make themselves troublesome again, and had planned an invasion, which Saul prepared to resist by raising an army of three thousand men. He took command himself of two thousand, and appointed his son, Jonathan, captain over the others. He had scarcely made this defensive preparation when a small army of Philistines invaded the country, but Saul easily beat them, without much loss, however, to either side. But it is probable that the small army of Philistines spoken of were rather sent as spies to see what the Israelites were doing under their new king.

Soon after this event the Ammonites, under command of Nahash, laid siege to the city of Jabesh-gilead, and so certain were they of effecting its capture that they refused to consider any better terms of surrender than the condition that the right eye of every person of the city should be put out. Under pretense of giving even this hard and shameful condition consideration, the people of Jabesh-gilead asked for a seven days' truce, which was granted. This time was most profitably employed, for messengers were at once dispatched to Saul, at Gibeah, for help, who delayed not a moment in giving the assistance so badly needed. He forthwith issued a call for troops among all the people of Israel, accompanying the order for enlistment with promises of severe punishment upon those who failed to respond promptly. In a few days he was thus enabled to assemble an army of 330,000 men at Bezek. He now made a forced march to Jabesh-gilead, before which he arrived on the sixth day of the truce, and fell upon the Ammonites at night, to their surprise, routing the camp and slaying many thousands. As the enemy retreated Saul pursued them throughout the entire day until darkness and put an end to the slaughter.

This victory of Saul's many of his subjects desired to celebrate by putting to death all those who had grumbled, in their jealousies, against his ordination

as king, but he was above the petty spites so often exhibited by his people, as with dignity and clemency befitting a king he replied that no man should be put to death on the day that Jehovah had saved Israel.

SAMUEL'S ADVICE TO THE PEOPLE.

His success as a soldier and mercy as a king, put an end to all opposition to his ruling, so that Saul was now solemnly ordained by all the tribes at Gilgal, who had before opposed his reign. At the festival, given soon after, Samuel was present and addressed the people, at the same time resigning his judgeship, which office now became abolished by reason of the substitution of a monarchy. Being old and full of the Spirit of God, at the same time possessing great love for his people, Samuel spoke to them in a most touching and compassionate manner. He first desired from them an acknowledgment of the integrity of his judicial administration, which being given, he charged the people with ingratitude to God, whom they had grievously sinned against, in calling for an earthly king to rule over them, rather than trusting themselves to the mighty arm and loving providence of Jehovah. But he reminded them that since their requests had been granted, they owed a sovereign allegiance to the king of their selecting, respect for whom was necessary to the full establishment of the kingdom. He further told them that if they served both Jehovah and their king they would attain to all blessings, but if they were rebellious the hand of God would punish them as it had their fathers. As an evidence of the prophetic character of his utterances, and the inspiration which had moved him, he lifted his eyes toward heaven, it being a clear day in harvest time, and called God to show the people a sign of His presence by sending a thunder storm out of the sky. No sooner had he spoken than a terrible rain came pouring down, accompanied by fearful peals of thunder and dazzling flashes of lightning. The people were stricken with fear for their lives at this exhibition of Jehovah's response to Samuel's prayer, and in terror fell on their knees and begged Samuel to avert God's wrath. He bade them fear not, but to keep the Lord's laws, who would watch over them as long as they lived uprightly.

When Saul had chosen 3000 men at Bethel, as already referred to, it is probable that it was his intention to use them as a body-guard, 2000 of whom were to remain with him and the other 1000 to be with his son Jonathan at Gibeah. These were no doubt depended upon to serve him loyally in cases of insurrection or any emergency, just as we see monarchs of the Old World to-day provided with a contingent of loyal soldiers to serve as a body-guard, or special protectors of the royal person.

JONATHAN'S GREAT VALOR.

It was not long after Saul's defeat of Nahash that the Philistines recovered from their surprise and rout, and mustered their armies again for another

contest. A party of the enemy therefore formed a garrison on a hill called Geba, which was opposite Saul's camp at Michmash. Jonathan was first to discover their presence, and supposing their object to be to surprise the king, sallied out, accompanied by no other person than his armor-bearer, to challenge the Philistines to battle. The arms of soldiers at that time being spears, swords and shields, it was quite a common practice for the soldiers of one army to challenge those of another to conflict, and such duels were usually witnessed by the two armies without interference, as such fights greatly encouraged personal valor.

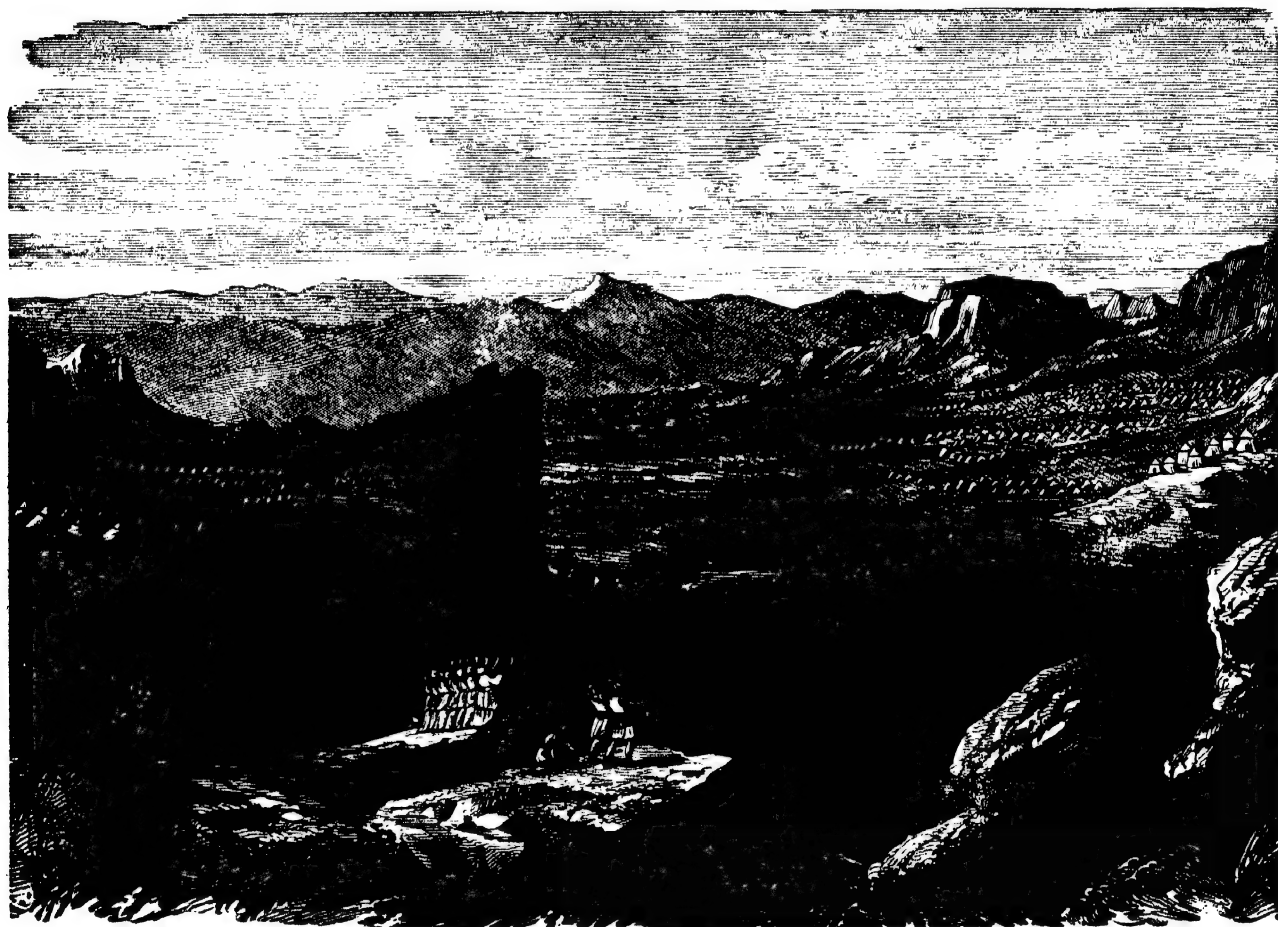
When Jonathan went out to challenge the Philistines he seems to have been under the guidance of God, for he spoke to his attendant as a prophet, telling him, if the Philistines answered his challenge by asking him to wait, then it should be taken as a sign that the Lord would not help him; but if, on the other hand, they should cry out to him, "Come up to us," then he would go up, because God would give him the victory. So Jonathan and his armor-bearer went and stood in sight of the Philistines, whom they challenged, any one of them, to battle. But the Philistines replied by mocking them with laughter, and saying, "Come up to us and we will show you a thing." Jonathan took these words as a sign of his victory, and clambered up over some large rocks which separated him from the enemy, his armor-bearer faithfully following. When they came up to the Philistines they fell upon them and fought with such valor that they killed no less than twenty. While the unequal contest was thus waging an earthquake occurred which shook the earth so violently that all the Philistines became helpless with terror.

The watchmen in Saul's camp saw the fighting among the Philistines, and reported what they had witnessed to Saul. He, knowing nothing of his son's adventure, was for a time sorely puzzled, for he could not discover who was waging battle with his enemies. To explore this mystery, therefore, he ordered the roll called of all his army, by which he ascertained that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not in the camp; and now, perceiving that it must be they who were fighting the Philistines, he set his army in motion to the hill of Geba. A great battle now took place, in which the Israelites were victorious, driving the enemy from their camp and pursuing them out of the country. So eager was he in this pursuit that Saul commanded his soldiers not to stop to eat until night was come, threatening with dire punishment any who should disobey his orders.

Jonathan was leading his one thousand men in the pursuit, and toward evening he came to a wood in which he found a hive of honey in a tree. All his men were very hungry, but they were afraid to eat the honey because of Saul's order. Jonathan, however, not being told of his father's prohibition, dipped his staff into the honey and thus conveyed some of the comb to his mouth. When this act was reported to Saul he immediately ordered that Jonathan be put to death, which sentence would have been executed but for the

earnest pleading of the soldiers for his life, asking, "Shall he who won this great victory for us be put to death?" and afterward declaring that no harm should come to him. This demand, that he spare Jonathan, was made in such an imperative manner that Saul was compelled to respect it.

Saul slew sixty thousand Philistines in this engagement, besides taking great numbers of cattle and much spoils, and then returned to his own city and reigned in peace for some time, and until Samuel called him to punish



THE DEFEAT OF THE AMMONITES.

"And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle."

—I SAM. xiv. 20.

the Amalekites and their allies. His success thus far had been so signal that the Israelites looked upon him as an inspired leader, and therefore rendered him such obedience that there was great prosperity among them. In time of peace he was not idle, however; for being surrounded by tribes whose hatred of Israel was perpetual, he increased his army, organized cavalry and chariot forces, and recruited from among the tallest and most vigorous of his subjects a body-guard that became famous for valor throughout the realm.

SAUL'S EXPEDITION AGAINST THE AMALEKITES.

When, therefore, Samuel bade Saul to wage war against the Amalekites he had the finest army that had ever been organized. This war was to be one of extermination, for Samuel commanded Saul to pursue the Amalekites constantly, from generation to generation, beginning with the women and children, and to spare not one, nor even the asses or cattle, but to "blot out the name of Amalek entirely," as Moses had before ordered. This dreadful, remorseless punishment was to be inflicted on the Amalekites for the outrages they had perpetrated on the Israelites during their sojourn in the wilderness, and upon the principle expounded by Moses, that the sins of the father should be visited upon his children and future generations.

In obedience to the command of Samuel, Saul hastened to gather his forces together at Gilgal, where, after numbering them, he found his army to consist of four hundred and thirty thousand men, at the head of which he marched into the country of the Amalekites and set parties in ambush at the river fords, so as to permit none to escape. He then began a series of surprises by which the Amalekites fell before him in great numbers, scarcely offering any resistance. He also attacked their cities and strongholds, and drove them out by battering down their walls, or by digging tunnels underneath, or by building overtopping walls and towers, from which his archers could rain down their arrows upon the people inside the defenses. These strategies were first practised by Saul, who therefore won greater honor for his masterful abilities as a soldier than had before been accorded him, and to this day he is entitled to rank among the great kings and generals of the world's history.

SAUL'S SIN AGAINST GOD.

The ruthless ravages of Saul's immense army were not long in accomplishing the utter destruction of the Amalekites, but their king, Agag, fell into his hands, whose comely person and persuading eloquence so prevailed with Saul that he resolved to spare him. The soldiers, too, instead of killing all the cattle, as they were ordered to do, were content to capture and keep them as a prey, and also to appropriate the spoils to their own use. All of these acts were offensive to God, who had ordered, through Samuel, that nothing should be spared, and especially that the Amalekites should be destroyed both root and branch.

When Saul had returned from his great victory he was met by Samuel, to whom he ran in raptures, declaring that God had given him the victory and that he had done everything God commanded. Samuel, however, had already been told by God of how Saul had done that which he was specially bidden not to do, and he therefore said to the king: "How is it then that I hear the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the greater cattle in the camp?" This inquiry covered Saul with confusion, who managed, however, to excuse

himself by saying the cattle had been reserved for sacrifices. He admitted also that he had spared the Amalekite king, but it was in order to bring him before the prophet for sentence what should be done with him.

SAMUEL REBUKES SAUL AND PROPHESES HIS DEPOSITION.

To the answers of Saul, Samuel made reply in full explanation of his faults before God, saying, "God is not delighted with sacrifices, but with good and with righteous men, who are such as follow His will and His laws, and never think that anything is well done by them but when they do as God has com-



SAMUEL REBUKING SAUL.

"Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king."

—I SAM. xv. 23.

manded them; that He then looks upon Himself as affronted, not when any one does not sacrifice, but when any one appears to be disobedient to Him. But that from those who do not obey Him, nor pay Him that duty which is the alone true and acceptable worship, He will not kindly accept their oblations, be those they offer ever so many and so fat, and be the presents they make Him ever so ornamental; nay, though they were made of gold and silver themselves; but He will reject them, and esteem them instances of wickedness and not of piety. And that He is delighted with those who still bear in mind this one thing, and this only, how to do that, whatsoever it be, which God

pronounces or commands for them to do, and to choose rather to die than to transgress any of those commands; nor does He require so much as a sacrifice from them. And when these do sacrifice, though it be a mean oblation, He better accepts of it, as the honor of poverty, than such oblations as come from the richest men that offer them to Him. Wherefore, take notice that thou art under the wrath of God, for thou hast despised and neglected what He commanded thee. How dost thou then suppose that He will respect a sacrifice out of such things as He hath doomed to destruction? unless perhaps thou dost imagine that it is almost one to offer it in sacrifice to God as to destroy it."

To this rebuke Samuel added the prophecy that Saul should not much longer be king, for God would depose him and set up a new ruler more worthy of the place than Saul had proved himself to be.

This sentence added greatly to the distress of Saul, who had now become somewhat vainglorious and anxious for the world's applause, so he besought Samuel to pray God for his forgiveness, promising never to offend again, and asking the prophet to go back with him that he might offer his thank-offering to God. But Samuel would not stay to hear him further, knowing that God would not become reconciled, whatever his promises, and turned to depart. At this the anxiety of Saul was so much increased that he took hold of Samuel's cloak in an effort to detain him, but the cloak was torn in his hand, whereupon the prophet told him that this was a new sign that his kingdom should be rent and taken from him, and given to a good and just man.

THE TERRIBLE EXECUTION OF KING AGAG.

Seeing that his disobedience would not be forgiven, Saul asked Samuel to go with him and worship God, which favor the prophet granted. When they had concluded their worshipping, Agag, the captive Amalekite king, was brought in, whose first exclamation before Samuel was, "How bitter is death!" possibly reflecting upon his own miserable end, or with the hope of exciting the prophet's compassion. Whether Samuel felt any pity for the unhappy monarch we know not, but certainly he regarded the king as well meriting death, for he said to him: "As thou hast made many of the Hebrew mothers to lament and bewail the loss of their children, so shalt thou, by thy death, cause thy mother to lament thee also." So saying, Samuel seized a sword and cut Agag to pieces, after which act he left Gilgal and went to his own city, Ramah, nor did he ever see Saul again, though he mourned long for the king's transgressions.

THE APPOINTMENT OF DAVID AS SAUL'S SUCCESSOR.

After Samuel had spent some time in Ramah mourning for Saul's disobedience, God told him to leave off his grief, as he had a new duty for him to perform in the ordination of a new king of Israel. He therefore ordered the prophet to take some holy oil and proceed to Bethlehem, to the house of

Jesse, and there anoint one of his sons to be king in Saul's place. At this command, Samuel was much concerned for fear that Saul would learn of his mission and kill him to prevent the choosing of another king. But God removed his fears by directing him in a safe way, so that Samuel reached Bethlehem without trouble, and repaired at once to Jesse's house. When he saluted the family they asked the purpose of his mission, to which he replied that it was to sacrifice to God. Samuel now set to work to prepare a heifer for the sacrifice, which being completed, he called Jesse and his sons, eight in number, to partake with him. Now, there were only seven of the sons present, the youngest, whose name was David, being at the time tending his father's flocks in a pasture somewhat remote from Bethlehem. When Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel perceived that the eldest son, Eliab, was tall and comely, very much resembling Saul, so he was upon the point of anointing him king, when God interposed, telling the prophet that he was not to seek a king among the tall and comely of feature, but from the righteous in heart. Then Samuel would have anointed the second eldest, but the Lord again restrained him; and so continued to withhold His sanction from the selection of all the seven sons. Samuel, now much embarrassed as to what he should do, asked Jesse if the seven were all the sons he had. The father replied that there was one other, the youngest, who was tending the sheep. So the young man was sent for; and when he came before Samuel, the Spirit of the Lord commanded that he be anointed, for it was he that had been chosen to rule over Israel.

David (*the beloved*), at the time of his selection, was a small stripling, of ordinary size, and in no sense commanding in appearance. His aspect was rather that of one in whom the poetic sentiment predominates—a tender, music-loving youth, full of bright fancies and joyful satisfaction, who enjoyed the companionship of his sheep more than the company of boys, and preferred rhapsodies and reflections to the common pastimes of boyhood. And yet this grandson of the beautiful Ruth and the just Boaz, was destined to be the greatest king that ever ruled, and from him was to descend the CHRIST, the King of kings.

David's introduction to Saul was quite as singular as the circumstances under which God had appointed him to take the sceptre of the Israelites. Being much alone in the fields with his father's sheep, David spent much of his time in playing upon the harp to beguile the hours and indulge his love for music, until he became known as a most skilled performer, whose music delighted all who came to listen to him.

Now, after Samuel's rebuke of Saul, and the prophecy that he should not much longer rule Israel, he fell into a great melancholy and was troubled with loss of sleep and the vexings of spirits. To comfort him in these spells, Saul's servants and physicians recommended that he send for a harper, whose music would bring peace to his soul and comfort to his troubled mind. This advice

seemed so well that Saul sent for David, whose fame as a player upon the harp was made known to him. But at this time, no one save the immediate family of Jesse knew that David had been anointed by Samuel, for God commanded that the matter be kept secret until His own good time for re-



DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL.

David was brought by his father to Saul's house, and remained with the king for some time; for so well did his music relieve Saul's distemper that the youth was prevailed upon to become the king's armor-bearer, and be also a member of his household.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE STORY OF DAVID—HE FIGHTS WITH THE GIANT GOLIATH.



It is not told us in the sacred writings how long David remained with Saul, and the narrative is also somewhat confusing as to whether David was appointed armor-bearer before or after his fight with Goliath; but it is more consistent with appearances and natural consequences to suppose that it was after. Another difficulty meets us in the apparent conflict of statements wherein it is made to appear that Saul remained at peace after his destruction of the Amalekites and their allies, while succeeding chapters are devoted to descriptions of his battles with the Philistines, among whom were classed the Amalekites, Moabites, Ammonites, etc. This confusion undoubtedly arises, as was explained in a previous chapter, from the want of sequence in the narrative. This is even illustrated by the fact that David was the great-grandson of Ruth, and yet circumstances are related in the history between Ruth and the last chapters of 1 Samuel, which must have occurred nearly four hundred years after Ruth's death. But without attempting to describe the events chronologically, or arguing the reasons why the compilers neglected to arrange the books of the Bible in the proper order as indicated by consecutive events, we will proceed according to the history as it is printed, being content with the assurance that the imperfect arrangement in no wise diminishes the interest or truth of the sacred narrative.

David returned to his father and resumed the duties of shepherd after a length of service in Saul's house, but events were now to happen that would soon call him from his quiet pursuit to take arms, and before manhood's period was reached he was to become the most famous warrior in all Israel.

Josephus says it was not long after David drove the spirit of melancholy from Saul by the melody of his voice and harp, that the Philistines reorganized a great army and again went to war with the Israelites. They pitched their camp on a plain between Shochoh and Azekah, but were soon driven from that place by Saul's army, which now came out to oppose them. It is more likely that, instead of being driven from their first position, the Philistines withdrew of their own accord in order to take up a more strategic place on a hill near by, from whence a wide view was afforded. Saul also occupied a hill, which lay opposite the Philistine camp, so that a valley lay between the two camps.

It would appear that neither army was anxious to open hostilities, for they lay thus inactive, glaring at each other for a period of forty days, content with exchanging taunts, each awaiting an attack from the other, as, owing to the nature of the encampments, the attacking party would have to march up a steep hill exposed to a galling fire of arrows and stones from those on the apex. There was in the Philistine camp a man named Goliath, a citizen of Gath, whose stature was so extraordinary that his very aspect inspired terror. His height was above eight feet, and his bulk proportionate.



DAVID'S FIGHT WITH THE GIANT.

"The stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth."—1 SAM. xvii. 49.

so that he must have weighed four hundred pounds at least. But the arms that he bore were even more formidable and massive than his size. He was protected by a coat of mail that weighed more than one hundred and fifty pounds, while beneath this and on his limbs were greaves of brass, the value of which at that time was greater than gold, and he wore a helmet made of the same metal. He carried a spear that was so heavy he had to support it on his shoulder; the head of it was made of iron, a metal even more rare than

brass, which weighed above twenty pounds, while several attendants followed behind carrying his shield, which was made to resemble a moon. This giant's voice was quite as terrible as his general aspect, for when he cried out it was like the deep tones of thunder. Relying upon his amazing strength and the massive armor that he wore, he marched down from the Philistine camp into the valley below and thence hurled defiance at the Israelites, challenging any of "the *servants* of Saul" to come out and fight him. But at his appearance all the army of Saul were dismayed, and no one was bold enough to hazard an issue with him. Every day, for forty days, this giant went into the valley, near the Israelites' camp, and bellowed his defiance, returning to the Philistines at evening to gloat over his valor and the cowardice of the enemy.

In Saul's army at this time were the three eldest brothers of David, for whose safety Jesse was so greatly concerned that he sent David to inquire of their welfare and to carry such messages as he might choose to send. As he came into the Israelite camp on the afternoon of the fortieth day that Goliath had stood before the army of Israel, he heard the giant issuing his usual challenge, and observed the fear that possessed the people. A youth, a mere stripling, though he was, David's courage and pride revolted at the cowardice displayed by the Israelites, seeing that none would go out to fight. "Who," he asked, "is this Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" Those who stood near told him that Saul had promised to give his daughter in marriage to the man who would kill the giant, but Eliab, his eldest brother, rebuked him for presuming to ask such a question and derided him the more when David expressed a willingness to stand before the mighty man in the name of the Lord.

David's desire to wage battle with Goliath was at length expressed before Saul, who, sending for him, and seeing his youth, advised him against matching his weakness against the strength of such a giant, who had been a warrior all his days. David, however, bade Saul to dismiss his fears, saying, that Jehovah, who had delivered him from the lion and the bear, would also protect him from the great Philistine. At this Saul told him to go, and prayed that Jehovah might be with him, besides arming him with his own weapons and armor. David started out to meet Goliath thus encumbered, but finding the armor too heavy he cast it aside and went forward clothed in his simple raiment and with no other weapon than a staff and sling, in the use of which he had made himself an expert while serving his father as a shepherd. As he went along he came to a little brook, from which he picked up five round stones and placed them in a pouch ready to his hand.

When Goliath saw David coming to accept his challenge, he spoke scornfully; asking if he had come to fight as against a dog, seeing nothing in his hand but a staff, not being near enough to observe the sling; but David replied as became a servant of God, in whom he relied for the victory, and ran swiftly toward his huge antagonist. When within the distance of a few yards David

placed a stone in his sling, and, whirling it twice about his head, let fly the missile upon its certain errand. In another moment the two armies saw the mighty giant stagger and fall forward prone on his face. The stone, directed no doubt by God, was true to the aim, and went crashing through the giant's forehead, and deep into his brain. David now ran fleetly to the body of his



"And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem."—I SAM. xvii. 54.

fallen foe, and jerking the dead man's sword from its sheath, with a sweep of its keen blade cleft the head of Goliath from the body and held it aloft to show to both armies how he had vanquished the vain-boasting giant.

At the dreadful sight of their champion fallen by the hand of a youth, the Philistines became panic stricken and fled with precipitation, pursued by the Israelites, as far as the gates of Gath and Ekron, who killed thirty thousand,

and afterward returned to take the spoils of the abandoned camp. David took from the body of Goliath, as trophies of his conquest, the head, armor and sword of the giant. Goliath's head was soon after publicly exhibited at Jerusalem, and the fame of David spread not only throughout Israel, but the neighboring countries as well, for such a valorous deed had never before been done.

Saul sent for David and persuaded him to remain with him for a time, though apparently having entirely forgotten him as the minstrel who had only a few years before charmed away his melancholy. In his new position, whether as armor-bearer, as it is written, or an officer of his court, David demeaned himself so uprightly that Saul bestowed upon him lavish favors, while Jonathan, of whom I have already written, conceived for him the strongest friendship, which was further cemented by a covenant between them. This friendship was of the utmost consequence to David, as we shall presently see.

SAUL BECOMES JEALOUS OF DAVID AND SEEKS HIS LIFE.

It was not long after David entered the king's service a second time that Saul became insanely jealous of the young warrior's fame, provoked chiefly by a song which was composed in celebration of David's victory over Goliath and which became popular in everybody's mouth. Saul first heard it sung by a body of Hebrew women who came out to serenade David, with instruments to accompany their voices. All the words of this song are not given in the Bible, but among the applauding verses were these:

"Saul hath slain his thousands."

To which the chorus responded in the full burst of praise:

"AND DAVID HIS TEN THOUSANDS."

The fear of dethronement, according to Samuel's prophecy, continually haunted Saul, so that he was suspicious of every one who became the subject of popular praise; and now that David had taken a place in the warmest affections of the people, Saul's hatred of him became so violent that on the day after first hearing the song sung, while the two were dining together, the king rose up suddenly and threw two spears at David, who only escaped being murdered by fleeing from Saul's presence.

In his saner moments the king realized how devotedly the Israelites loved David, and that to openly assassinate him might cause a revolt among the people, so he resolved to rid himself of the young man by secretly plotting his death. To disguise his schemes more effectually he sent for David and appointed him chief of a thousand men, at the same time offering to fulfil his promise to give him his daughter in marriage for having slain Goliath. But before celebrating this promise he expressed a desire that David would undertake new enterprises against his enemies, hoping that he would meet his death from some of the Philistines. All the things asked of him David performed, but when he returned to Saul he found that Merab, the daughter promised him, had been married to another during his absence. But now the

second daughter of Saul, Michal, became deeply enamored of David, who returned the love given him, and would have gladly espoused her at once; but Saul, still hoping to bring about his destruction, contrived to have his servants demand of David, as a dowry, the spoils of one hundred Philistines whom he should slaughter. These hard terms David readily agreed to, and taking his army went into the Philistine country and engaged a body of the enemy in battle, in which he killed two hundred. Divesting the slain of their bloody garments, he brought the spoils and cast them at Saul's feet.

Though mad with jealousy and ambition, Saul still possessed some goodly traits, especially during intervals of calmness; and it chanced that his reason was with him when David returned with the bloody spoils, so he gave his daughter Michal in marriage to David, but his enmity was in no wise abated. Michal, however, was a true and faithful wife, loving her husband above her father, upon which account, and also the friendship of Jonathan, which seemed to grow constantly stronger, Saul sought no longer to disguise his intentions, but gave a peremptory order to Jonathan and his courtiers to kill David. By a strategy of Jonathan, however, he contrived to restore David to Saul's favor, but the reconciliation was of short duration.

SAUL'S SECOND ATTACK ON DAVID'S LIFE.

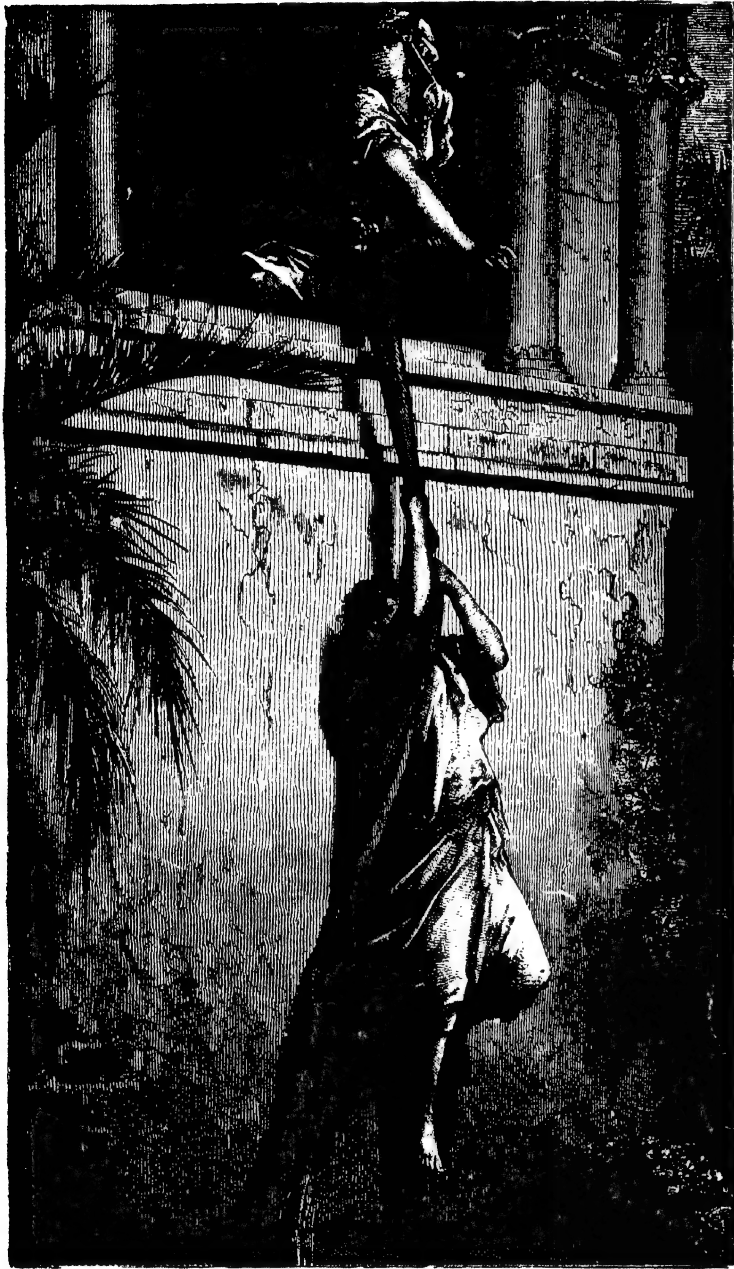
The Philistines, though often beaten, were still strong enough to offer opposition to the Israelites, and there was, therefore, constant war between them, though of a desultory character. David undertook a new expedition against the enemy, who had appeared upon the borders of Judah, and gained a great victory, for which he was again applauded by the people. This so increased Saul's jealousy that he cast his spear at David a third time, but, as before, without avail. David now ran from the royal presence and hid in his own house, round which, however, Saul stationed a guard, with instructions to kill him when he should appear in the morning.

It was now that the faithfulness of Michal was best shown, for in the night she aided her husband to escape by letting him down over the walls, and then, making a dummy, set it in bed, and sent messengers to Saul to tell him that David was sick. The deception was protracted long enough to enable David to make good his escape from Gibeah—the royal residence—and to reach Ramah, the home of Samuel. A strange thing now came to pass:

There was a "school of the prophets" at Ramah, instituted to reform the priestly order and to prepare those received into the school for prophesying, or, more properly, no doubt, to prepare them for the ministry, somewhat after the manner of theological schools of to-day. At the head of this prophetic order was Samuel, whose quiet life had kept him from view since his anointment of David.

It was not long after David's escape that Saul learned of his presence in Ramah, and he sent his officers there to arrest him, but when they came to

the school they were astonished to see the company of prophets, with Samuel as their instructor, all engaged in prophesying. The effect upon them was so great that they, too, fell to predicting, by the power of God. Saul, hearing



ESCAPE OF DAVID.

"So Michal let David down through a window."—1 SAM. xix. 12.

how his messengers were converted, went himself to the school, but as he came to the well of Sechu, in the suburbs of Ramah, the Spirit of God also came upon him, and he, too, began to prophesy, and afterward came and fell at the feet of Samuel, acknowledging the goodness of the Lord.

When Saul returned to Gibeah he told his kinsmen and the people that he was reconciled to David, and desired him to attend again at court. But this pretension was discredited by both Jonathan and David, who, however, resolved to test Saul's sincerity, by first renewing the covenant of their friendship perpetually.

The following day was the feast of the new moon, which was solemnly kept by the Israelites as a time for purification, but instead of appearing at the table at feasting time, David went and hid himself in a pile of stones called Ezel, near Saul's residence, as Jonathan had directed him.

Saul sat at the banquet with Abner, his chief officer, and Jonathan, but made no inquiry why David was absent, supposing that he had not yet purified himself. On the second day of the feast, however, finding that David continued to absent himself, Saul asked Jonathan the reason why he

was not with them. To this inquiry Jonathan replied that David had been invited to sacrifice that day with his kinsmen, in Bethlehem, having first asked his permission to go. At this Saul fell into a furious rage, and calling Jonathan a

renegade, accused him of conniving with David against himself, and reminded him that while the rulership of Israel should rightfully descend to him as the lawful heir, yet he would never become king while David lived. He then ordered that David be brought to him that he might kill him. Jonathan attempted to remonstrate with his father upon the injustice of his motives, whereupon the enraged king hurled his spear at his son, and then left the table without partaking of any food.

On the succeeding morning Jonathan, accompanied by a lad, went into a field where David was hiding, and began shooting arrows, which the boy gathered up again. This was the sign to David that he should flee for his life, but as he came out of hiding the two embraced and pledged anew their fidelity to each other.

DAVID IN EXILE.

Being thus warned of his danger, David fled from Gibeah and went to the city of Nob, which belonged to the priests, and the place where the Tabernacle was preserved. As he approached alone, Ahimelech, the high-priest, saw him and was concerned for his safety, but David told him that he had come upon a commission from Saul, and had appointed servants to meet him at the next place. As his food was nearly exhausted he asked Ahimelech for five rolls of bread for himself and his imaginary servants. It chanced that the priest had nothing but some loaves of stale shew-bread, but these he gave David, after first being assured that the receiver was undefiled, but the act was nevertheless against the law, though afterward justified by the Lord upon the ground of necessity.

Before taking his departure from Ahimelech, David explained that the urgency of his mission had prevented him from taking any weapons, and he therefore asked the priest if he had a sword or spear that he could give him. The priest replied that the sword of Goliath, the Philistine, whom he had slain, was there, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod (high-priest's dress), and that if he wished he could take that, as he had no other. David was rejoiced at this information, and took the sword gladly, for he said there was none other like it.

David tarried only a short time at Nob, and went quickly on to Gath, the former home of Goliath. Here his identity was discovered by the Philistines, who would have quickly put him to death; but upon being brought before King Achish he feigned idiocy so well that he was dismissed. Having nowhere to lay his head, and with enemies on every side, as a last resort he now took refuge in the caves that are so numerous on the borders of the great plains of Shefelah, near the Mediterranean Sea, and not far from Bethlehem. Being, as it were, outlawed himself, there were attracted to him the restless and lawless characters of the adjacent country, and in a short time he found himself the leader of a brave band of followers such as Jephthah was captain over before being called to deliver Israel.

Having first provided a place of safety for his parents among the Moabites, who were his kinsmen through Ruth, his grandmother, David began a war of spoliation against the Philistines, though his army numbered only four hundred men, some of whom were his nearest relatives. His success was so



THE PARTING OF DAVID AND JONATHAN.

"And they kissed one another, and wept one with another."—1 SAM. xx. 41.

remarkable, however, that notwithstanding the smallness of his forces, the Philistine cities were in a state of anxiety lest he should attack them. The wonderful bravery of his warriors is illustrated by an incident recorded in the Bible, wherein David, having expressed a wish for a drink of water from a

well in Bethlehem, beside whose brink he had spent many hours of his youth, three of his devoted followers started at once to procure the longed-for water. Nothing daunting their desperate valor, they cut their way through the Philistine army, which was encamped in the Rephaim valley, and reached the well, which was by a gate of Bethlehem. Having procured the water, they fought their way back, and in the pride of their renown gave the water to David to drink. The wonderful daring of this trio so affected David, however, that instead of drinking the water he poured it upon the ground as an offering to God, saying, "Shall I drink the blood of these men, that have put their lives in jeopardy?"

SAUL RENEWS THE HUNT FOR DAVID.

While David and his men were hiding in the cave of Adullam they were joined by the prophet Gad and eleven other men under Amasai, who was the son of his sister Abigail. By Gad's counsel David soon after left the cave and went into the forests of Hareth, among the hills of Judah, but he had tarried here only a short while when Saul heard of his presence and set out in person to effect his capture or death, having become mistrustful of the men he had before sent against him. Repairing to a grove at Ramah, Saul called his army together there and harangued them upon their disloyalty and endeavored to incite them to anger against David and Jonathan. This speech failed to elicit any response from his army, whose sympathies continued strong for the two exiles; but there was an Edomite officer, named Doeg, who, we remember, was present, as a servant, at the meeting of David and the high-priest Ahimelech, when the latter had given bread and the sword of Goliath to David, and this Edomite now told Saul of the help which the high-priest had given to his enemy, artfully contriving to make it appear that Ahimelech had given succor to David out of sympathy for the latter's conspiracy against the king. Ahimelech was therefore immediately summoned to attend before Saul, charged with treason. The high-priest responded to the summons, and being confronted with the charge, told Saul that he was ignorant of David's treason, but believing him to have come as a loyal messenger from the king he had received and honored him as such and also as Saul's son-in-law, esteeming him worthy of the confidence bestowed.

This protestation of innocence was not accepted by Saul, whose fury was so great that he ordered his soldiers to slay Ahimelech, together with all the priests of Nob. But his guards refused to execute the cruel order, whereupon the same command being given to Doeg, who was a descendant of Esau, the infamous man slew eighty-five of the priests with his own hand. Besides this the entire city was given up to massacre, including men, women, children and every live thing that was in the place. Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, alone escaped, and fleeing to David, told him of the slaughter. The news brought great sorrow to David, for he saw that it was the result of the deceit he had practised upon Ahimelech.

DAVID REFUSES TO REVENGE HIMSELF UPON SAUL.

Having now with him the prophet Gad, and also the rightful successor to the high-priesthood, David placed himself under the guidance of the oracle of Jehovah, and marched against the Philistines, who were at the time besieging Keilah, and whom he speedily overcame, after a great battle. Here David established himself for a time, but being warned by the sacred ephod that the men of Keilah had conspired to deliver him up to Saul, he hastily left the place with his army, now numbering six hundred men, and fled to the wilderness of Ziph. It was here that Jonathan and David parted, after renewing

their covenant of perpetual friendship, the former assuring David that he should yet become king over Israel, and expressing the hope that he himself would be next to him. Jonathan now returned to his own home, refusing to join his father, whose anger would have made such a step dangerous.

The Ziphites, joined against David, betrayed his presence to Saul, who now left Gibeah and with his army and spies hunted him like a partridge over the hills of Judea. David fled again to the wilderness of Maon, in the extreme south, where he was pressed so closely by Saul that only a mountain separated



DAVID CUTTING OFF THE SKIRT OF SLEEPING SAUL.

"Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily."

almost surrounded David, Saul was suddenly called away by the news of an invasion of the Philistines, but he soon after repelled the invaders, and with an army of three thousand men renewed his search for David, who had now fled to caves in the wilderness of Engedi.

Saul sorely pressed David and his little band, who were compelled to flee from rock to rock like so many hunted goats. At length, as David had taken refuge in a certain cave, Saul by chance entered alone, not being aware, however, that the place had been chosen as a retreat by his enemy. Being weary

with the chase, Saul lay down by the mouth of the cave and fell asleep, and while thus resting he was discovered by David and his men. The opportunity for revenging himself upon the king had now arrived, and he was therefore urged by his followers to slay him, but David contented himself with approaching the unconscious monarch and cutting off a portion of his skirt. But even this insult to his king gave him much remorse, for when Saul had awakened and was going out of the cave, David ran after him, crying, "My father, lord, the king;" he then bowed down before him and, in a passionate burst of grief,



DAVID ADDRESSING SAUL.

"And David said to Saul, . . . My father, see, yea, see, the skirt of thy robe in my hand."

—I SAM. xxiv. 11.

protested his innocence of any desire to harm him, and showed the skirt he had cut off as a proof that he had spared the king's life.

The appeal which David made to Saul touched his heart, and with that impulsive spirit so often before exhibited, he replied, "Is this thy voice, my son David!" An interview now took place between the two, in which Saul acknowledged the magnanimity of David, and confessed the Divine decree which had called him to rule over Israel. After this interview Saul returned to Gibeah, but David would not trust himself to the whimsical caprices of his jealous father-in-law, and remained in his fastnesses.

THE STORY OF DAVID'S MARRIAGE TO ABIGAIL.

It was not long after the parting between Saul and David in the cave of Engedi that Samuel died and was buried with great ceremony, at Ramah, where he had spent the last several years of his life. The mourning of Israel for this great man was long and bitter, but by none other was his death so greatly regretted as by David, who loved him, not only as his early preceptor and guide, but also because, up to the time of his death, he continued to exercise some restraint upon Saul, and whose advice was always in behalf of the anointed of God—himself. Anticipating a renewal of Saul's jealous anger, David moved from his haunts in Engedi and retired into the wilderness of Paran, which was in the south. Here a singular adventure befell him, as we shall see.

The chief city of Paran was called Maon, in which there lived a man named Nabal, a descendant of Caleb, who was possessed of great wealth. His



NABAL, CELEBRATING THE HARVEST CLOSE.

"Nabal is his name, and folly is with him."—1 SAM. xxv. 25.

flocks were so numerous that they covered all the surrounding hills; but as the country was infested with robbers, he was much annoyed by thieves who thrived off his folds.

David made his camp beside Maon, and having no other means of subsistence he volunteered to defend Nabal's flocks for the few that would suffice for his food. Having performed this service well, David sent ten of his men to Nabal, during sheep-shearing time, with a polite request for a present of such number of sheep as he might

choose to give. Instead of generously responding to this very proper request, Nabal returned a reply so insulting in its language and spirit that David's anger was aroused and he resolved to administer a severe punishment to the rich but avaricious churl. Accordingly he took four hundred of his men to attack Nabal, leaving two hundred behind to protect the camp. But on his way he met Abigail, the wife of Nabal, who, having been informed of David's request and also his threat to destroy her husband, had come to propitiate his anger by bringing an abundance of provisions, such as parched corn, bread, raisins, ready-dressed sheep, figs and wine in skins. When she had met David she pressed upon him all the things thus brought, and besought him to spare her husband, acknowledging him as the future king of Israel and the power in the hand of Jehovah.

Abigail is represented as having been a very beautiful woman, and of great

intelligence, so that it is no matter of surprise that she should find favor in David's eyes, who gave thanks for the presents, and sent her home with assurances that the possessions of Nabal would not be violated. But upon Abigail's return she found her husband unconscious from the deep potations of wine in which he had indulged, and it was not until morning that she could tell him of the evil her actions had averted. Nabal, however, though he recovered his senses, did not recover his strength, for his drunkenness produced a sickness from which he died ten days after the meeting of his wife with David.

Upon hearing of the death of Nabal, David sent messengers to Abigail asking her to become his wife, for he was greatly moved by her beauty from the time of first beholding her. She seemed to have well understood the character of David and the future that had been predicted for him, for she sent a reply in which she declared her unworthiness to even touch his feet. But being pressed she came finally to David's camp, with all her servants, and became his wife.

Before his marriage to Abigail—how long before we are not told, nor is the circumstance explicitly related in the Bible—David had married Ahinoam, of Jezreel, his first wife Michal having been given by Saul to Phalti, in the city of Gallim.

DAVID AGAIN SPARES SAUL'S LIFE.

After his marriage to Abigail, David left Paran and returned again to the wilderness of Ziph, but no sooner had he come into the country than some of the Ziphites made report of the fact to Saul, assuring him that his old enemy might now be easily caught.

Upon learning that David was again among the Ziphites, having returned from Paran with fresh honors, Saul's old jealousy and hatred were aroused, and gathering together three thousand men he marched rapidly toward the camp of David, and at night halted near him at a place called Hachilah. David, however, had been apprised of Saul's coming, and sending out spies to watch, he thus discovered the king's army encamped at Hachilah. As soon as he learned of the enemy's proximity, he called Abishai, his nephew, and Ahimelech, a Hittite, and taking only these two with him he made his way secretly into Saul's camp. Carefully approaching the royal tent he looked in and saw the king asleep, while about him lay his guards, who were also in profound slumber. Abishai desired to kill Saul as he lay sleeping, but David restrained him, desirous of again manifesting his magnanimity; so he took Saul's spear and the cruse of water that was beside him, and with these evidences of his daring he made his way out of the camp undiscovered by any of Saul's army. When he had passed well out of the camp and across a brook beside which the army lay, David cried out to the king and his guards until they were awakened, and then reproached them for their want of vigilance. Abner, the commander of the guard, answering the cries, asked who it was that had called, to whom David replied: "It is I, the son of Jesse, whom

you make a vagabond. But what is the matter? Dost thou that art a man of great dignity, and of the first rank in the king's court, take so little care of thy master's body? and is sleep of more consequence to thee than his preservation and thy care of him? This negligence of yours deserves death, and punishment to be inflicted on you, who never perceived when, a little while ago, some of us entered into your camp, nay, as far as to the king himself, and to all the rest of you. If thou look for the king's spear and his cruse of water, thou wilt learn what a mighty misfortune was ready to overtake you in your very camp without your knowing it."

Saul heard David thus talking aloud to the guard, and knowing it to be his voice, saw at once how he had been again in David's power, but who had a second time so graciously spared his unworthy life; so he rose up and went to speak with David, thanking him for his preservation, and assuring him that he would do him no harm now that he perceived David loved him better than he loved himself. Saul also begged David's pardon for having so unjustly hunted him and made him an exile from his friends, returning his kindness with anger and injustice. David, seeing that Saul was humiliated, sent back the spear and cruse, after which the king returned to Gibeah, but David, still mistrustful of Saul's jealousy, went away into the land of the Philistines, and with his six hundred men entered Gath, over which city Achish was still king.

THE SIN AND DECEPTION OF DAVID.

The ways of God are often mysterious, as we have already seen in the careers of David and Saul, both of whom were anointed by Samuel to rule over Israel. We may wonder why God's forbearance with Saul was so great, or that He permitted David to be so dreadfully persecuted when He might have at once brought him into possession of the throne whereon he had been appointed to sit. But the end only shows a wisdom which man could never have exhibited. God's purposes are always wise, and we will now soon see how His design was accomplished through the exercise of wholesome examples that would prove of great benefit to David, and to all mankind as well.

David's second visit to Achish was made under very different circumstances from those which brought him first before the king. He was now no longer the friendless outcast, driven to act the idiot in order to escape the penalty of having slain the Philistine champion, Goliath; but a man of renown, whose army of six hundred might well be compared to the modern heroes of Balaklava.

The Philistines had become so powerful that Saul gave them battle without great confidence in the result, and only when driven, by acts of invaders, to measure his strength with them. David knew this, and, therefore, for his own protection, he sought Achish, who would respect him for Saul's enmity. Soon after thus joining forces with the Philistines, David asked for a place of residence, and was given the frontier city of Ziklag. We now behold David in

the role of a deceiver, whose actions are difficult to explain, though they are, no doubt, due to the mysterious ways in which Providence works His wisdom to perform.

In his wars with the Israelites, Achish expected that David would lend his assistance, since, though he was an Israelite himself, having craved the protection of a Philistine against his own people, it was proper to suppose he would prove loyal to his benefactors. But David could not be an enemy to his race, for he loved his people, and believed that they would be true to him when Saul should be removed by the hand of God. Though cherishing these sentiments, David sought to deceive Achish, and committed a great sin in the manner in which this deception was carried out.

David's residence in Ziklag was only for a period of a few months, but during this time, being sent to battle with the Israelites, instead of engaging them, he privately attacked the Geshurites and Amalekites, neighbors and allies of the Philistines, and laid waste their country, took their cattle, camels and spoils of whatever character he could find, and brought them to Achish as possessions captured from the Israelites. To the more perfectly protect his deceit from being discovered by Achish, he put every one to the sword of those he attacked, so that none might be left to tell the true story.

When David presented himself before Achish with an abundance of free gifts as the prey of his invasions, and being asked from whence the spoils had come, he made answer that they had been taken from those tribes living in the south of Palestine, which were, of course, the Jews. Thus imposed upon, Achish placed unlimited confidence in David, as an enemy of Israel, and planned a campaign against the Israelites in which David was expected to aid him. Indeed, David had carried his deception so far that he boasted of the courage he would exhibit against his people, and which accident alone prevented him from proving.

SAUL CONSULTS THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

When Achish had resolved upon a war with Israel he sent orders throughout his realm and to his allies to arm themselves and assemble at Reggan, from which place and rendezvous they would suddenly attack their enemies and overwhelm them. David was also appealed to for aid, and he, quickly responding, made boasts that he would now repay the kindness and hospitality of the Philistine king.

A short time before this last declaration of war Saul had taken the most dreadful measures to rid the country of necromancers and fortune tellers, in accordance with God's command that all those having a familiar spirit should be put to death. He caused a great many of those suspected, as well as those openly charged with witchcraft, to be slain, until he believed there was not one remaining in his realm; but he was soon to repent this decree, and to commit sacrilege by seeking for a witch for consultation.

When the Philistines had gathered together in the valley of Jezreel, oppo-

site the camp of Israel, Saul saw that their numbers were very great, so that he was sore distressed in mind, being afraid to engage in battle lest he should be put to rout and his kingdom devastated. In the agony caused by his desperate situation he cried to God, but receiving no answer, he sent his messengers to inquire if there was not yet living a woman having a familiar spirit who could call up the dead, by which he hoped to learn the fate that was in store for him. One of the messengers soon returned and told him that there



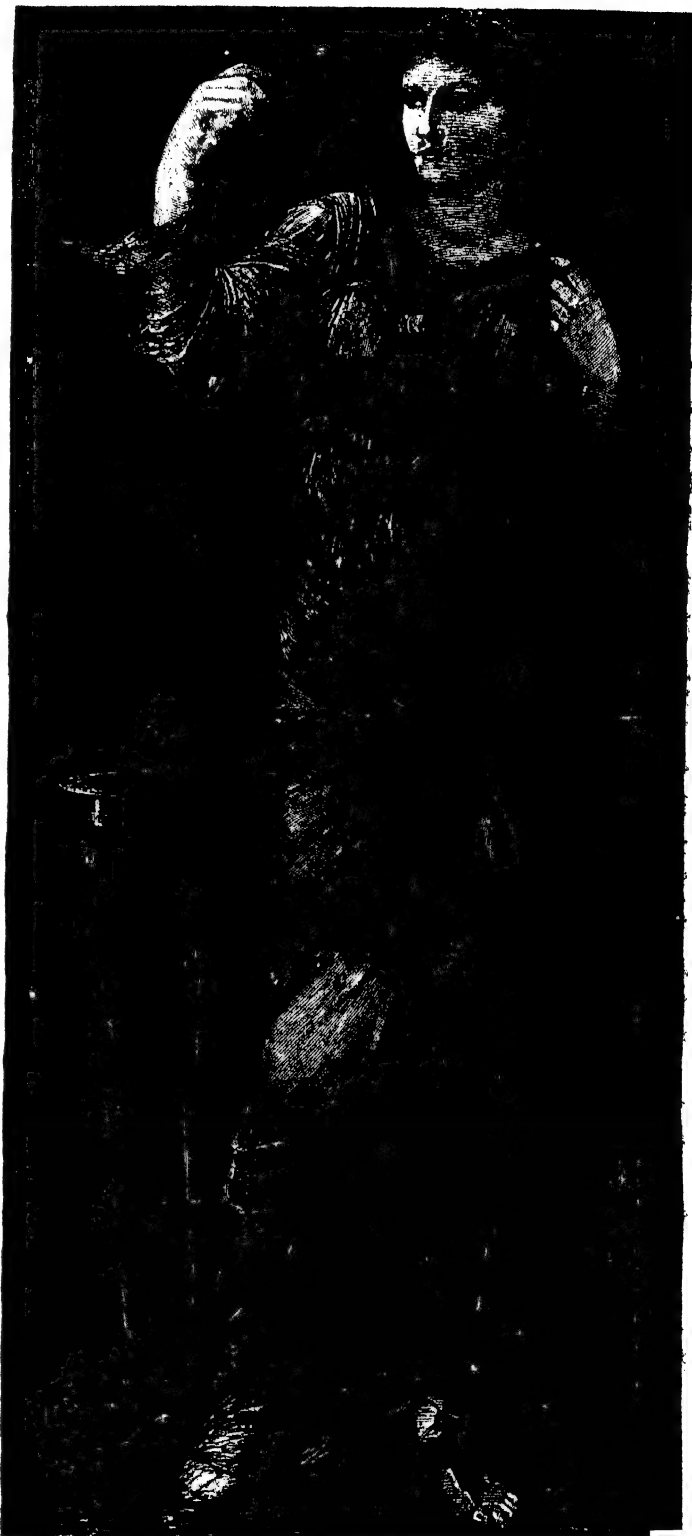
SAUL'S VISIT TO THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

"And Saul perceived that it was Samuel."—1 SAM. xxviii. 14.

was such a woman in the city of Endor, unknown to any that were in the camp. Upon receiving this news, he divested himself of his royal apparel, and taking his servants with him he repaired to the woman's house. When he had come into her presence he entreated her to call up the soul of one that was dead whom he would name. She refused at first to exercise her art, telling him that the king had banished or slain all such of her kind, and that it ill became him to lay a snare by which she would be discovered and punished. Saul declared to her upon oath that he would tell no one and other-

wise pleaded so hard that the witch at length consented to bring up the spirit of Samuel, as he had begged her to do. After some incantations the woman saw, clairvoyantly, the spirit of a man whom she described as venerable and divine aspect. But at this she showed great fear, and exclaimed, "Art not thou King Saul?" for the spirit of Samuel had so impressed her. Saul now admitted his identity and asked her to give him a better description of the spirit she saw, whereupon she told him it was the soul of one glorious in aspect, of extreme old age, and clad in a priestly mantle. By this description Saul perceived that it was the spirit of Samuel, and bowed himself low in an attitude of worship. Samuel now spoke to him, through the voice of the woman, commanding to know why he had been disturbed, to which Saul answered by saying that he was in great distress of mind by reason of the defiance and threatenings of his enemies; that God had forsaken him in his extremities, and that neither the medium of prophecy nor of dreams was longer available to discover to him the future, and hence he had come to consult the shade of his old friend who had taken care of him and had anointed him.

Samuel answered Saul, as reported by Josephus, as follows: "It is in vain for thee to desire



"Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land."—1 SAM. xxviii. 3.

to learn of me anything further, when God hath forsaken thee; however, hear what I say, that David is to be king, and to finish this war with good success; and thou art to lose thy dominion and thy life, because thou didst not obey God in the war with the Amalekites, and hast not kept his commandments, as I foretold thee while I was alive. Know, therefore, that the people shall be made subject to their enemies, and that thou, with thy sons, shall fall in the battle to-morrow, and thou shalt then be with me [in Hades, signifying *shade*, or *death*]."

When Saul heard this prophecy he fell down from grief and fear, and for a time appeared as one dead. His anxieties had caused him to abstain from food the foregoing day, which being discovered to the woman, she prepared some bread, and gave him meat of the only calf she possessed, and after much persuasion induced him to sit at her table and eat. When he had finished he returned to his camp that night, so that none might know of his visit.

DAVID IS DRIVEN OUT OF THE PHILISTINE CAMP.

In the assembling of the Philistine forces in the valley of Jezreel, Achish came to the place of rendezvous, accompanied by David and his six hundred men, last, and when the numbering of the army was begun, according to the custom of that time, it was discovered by some of Achish's allies that David had enrolled himself as a fighter against Israel. Many of the Philistines objected to trusting David in the battle, declaring that he would prove recreant in the most critical stage of the fight by becoming reconciled to Saul, as he had previously done. Achish tried to dispel their doubts of David's loyalty, but being unable to do so the king sent him immediately away, telling him to return to Ziklag and preserve the place against threatened invasions, thus, by an accident, so to speak, preventing him from fighting against his own people.

David had not proceeded far on his road toward Ziklag, when he met a messenger who told him that the city had been laid waste by the Amalekites, who, not content with burning the place, had carried off all the women and children captives, among whom were David's two wives. This sad news so oppressed David that he rent his clothes, and would have wept, but that his heart was so oppressed, grief had dried his tears. His soldiers were no less affected, and blaming him for their misfortunes, were upon the point of stoning him to death. At this, David raised his voice to Jehovah, and calling to Abiathar, the high-priest, bade him inquire of God, by the sacred ephod, if he should pursue after the Amalekites. The oracle being favorable, David set out on the march at once, accompanied by his following of four hundred men. As he came to the brook of Besor he met an Egyptian who was wandering about almost dead of hunger. After David had given him food, he inquired of the man the cause of his misfortune. The Egyptian replied that he had been with his master at the pillage of Ziklag, but having been sick he was unable

to follow his master, and was left behind to care for himself. David refreshed the man so that he was able to travel, and used him as a guide to find the Amalekites. He came up with the enemy as they lay scattered on the ground feasting and drinking off the spoils taken at Ziklag, and made such a sudden attack upon them that they were all slaughtered except four hundred, who escaped on the camels. David thus recovered everything that had been taken from Ziklag, including the men, women and children carried away captives, among whom were his two wives, and returned in triumph to his own city.

THE DEATH OF SAUL.

While David was pursuing the Amalekites, a great thing had happened to Saul and his followers, by which the last barrier was removed between David and the throne. Notwithstanding the rueful prophecy of the spirit of Samuel, Saul, though feeling that his doom was impending, went out to meet the enemy that was marshalled in Jezreel valley. He had moved his army to the mountain of Gilboa before seeking an interview with the witch of Endor, and having returned oppressed with the forecast of his own destruction he seems to have grown reckless under the knowledge that nothing could now avail him. He therefore marched down into the valley of Jezreel and engaged the host of Philistines, whose forces greatly exceeded his own. The battle raged furiously for some hours, when at length the Israelites gave way and

SAUL'S LAST BATTLE WITH THE PHILISTINES.



retreated up the mountain, closely pressed by the Philistines, who slaughtered them in vast numbers and without mercy. But none fought more valorously on that day than Saul and his three sons, Jonathan, Melchishua and Abina-



SUICIDE OF SAUL AND HIS ARMOR-BEARER.

"Therefore Saul took a sword and fell upon it."—1 SAM. xxxi. 4.

dab, who fell one after another round their father and king, esteeming death an honor in the defense of Israel. At last, wounded by a score of arrows, until further defense was impossible, when his mighty arm had become palsied

through the exertion of hewing down his enemies, and the loss of blood. Saul commanded his armor-bearer to pierce him through with his sword, that it might not be said he had perished at the hands of the Philistines. The armor-bearer, however, was afraid to raise his hand against his master, whereupon Saul took his sword, and placing the point to his breast fell upon it, but not being able to force it through his armor he called to a young man who was near, and who chanced to be an Amalekite, to slay him, which he accordingly did. Thus miserably perished one of Israel's greatest warriors who, had he obeyed God in all things, might have become the most renowned character of Jewish history.

The young man who had killed Saul took his golden bracelet and the royal crown that was upon his head and fled away with them, afterward bearing the news of Saul's overthrow to David and delivering up to him the bracelet and crown, as a proof that he told what was true.

After the battle was over, and all the Israelites engaged therein had been slain, the Philistines went over the field to gather up the spoils that had been left, as it was customary to strip the dead bodies of all enemies. While thus engaged they came upon the corpses of Saul and his three sons, whom they stripped, and then cutting off their heads, carried their bodies and hung them on crosses on the walls of Bethshan, and dedicated their armor in the heathen temple of Ashtaroath.

The cities of the Israelites that were in the district of Judea were hastily abandoned in fear of the Philistines, but some of the most courageous inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, having heard of the indignity done to the bodies of Saul and his sons, journeyed all night and secretly came to Bethshan, and recovering the bodies, took them to their city and buried them at a place called Aroura. The funeral rites were conducted with great ceremony, befitting a king whose death they lamented, and a public fast was observed for seven days.

By none was the death of Saul more sincerely mourned than by David, who, though persecuted and outrageously wronged by the king, looked upon him still as one of God's anointed. But for Jonathan, David's grief was yet greater, and the overwhelming sorrow which now bowed him down found expression in a Jeremiade that is justly celebrated as one of the most exquisite poems of any age. Saul's reign, as the first king of Israel, was for a period of forty years, eighteen years during the life of Samuel, and twenty-two years after that great prophet's death.

CHAPTER XIX.

DAVID IS PROCLAIMED KING.



2 Samuel.

HE overthrow of Saul was followed by other victories by the Philistines, until they had made themselves masters of all that region west of the Jordan, which was the richest portion of Palestine. All the Israelites fled to the east of Jordan, and soon afterward made David their king at Hebron, where he ruled for a period of seven years; but not in peace, for Abner, Saul's general, was so jealous of David that he fomented a division in Israel by proclaiming Ish-bosheth, Saul's only surviving son, king of Gilead, and nominally over all Judea, whose

seat of government was at Mahanaim, which was also east of Jordan. Abner attempted to enforce his proclamation not only upon those east of the Jordan, but sought to extend Ish-bosheth's power on the west side as well, and a civil war followed which continued with varying results for about five years.

Abner raised a considerable army and marched upon Gibeon, where he was met by an opposing force under Joab, who was the son of David's sister Zeruiah. The two armies encamped on opposite sides of the Pool of Gibeon, where, both being reluctant to hazard battle, it was agreed that twelve soldiers selected from each side should engage each other, and the result of the contest should decide which army had the more valiant men. Accordingly, twelve Benjaminites went out to meet twelve men of Judah, and they fell upon each other at a place equidistant between the two armies. The combat was a fearful one and fatal to all of the contestants. When they came together it was in pairs, each man seizing his adversary by the hair and plunging his sword into his enemy's body until the twenty-four champions lay dead upon the field. The fight therefore not determining the question at issue, the two armies became engaged and fought with great fury until Abner's men were beaten, and retreated, followed by Joab, who incited his soldiers to do their utmost to destroy every man of their enemies. In the army of Joab was his younger brother Asahel, whose fleetness of foot it is said exceeded that of a horse. His valor was equal to his swiftness, and he pursued after Abner to take his life. The race was a strong one and continued for a great distance,

with Asahel constantly gaining on his foe. Seeing that he was about to be overtaken Abner begged Asahel to turn back lest he should be forced to slay him and thereafter not be able to look his brother Joab in the face. But Asahel had no mind to give over the pursuit, but continued to press Abner until within a spear's throw, when the latter turned suddenly upon Asahel and cast his javelin into his body, killing him upon the instant. Joab, seeing his brother fall, pressed on with his other brother, Abishai, after Abner until it was sunset, and they had come to a place called Ammah. Here Abner contrived to talk with Joab, and to persuade him to give over the pursuit by telling him that it was not right that men of the same nation should fight against each other, and by declaring that the death of Asahel was due to his own fury and folly.

When the pursuit had been abandoned, Joab camped with his army at Ammah while, during the night Abner drew off his forces and marched across the Jordan to Mahanaim, where Ish-bosheth lived. In the morning Joab took account of the slain, finding that there had fallen three hundred and sixty of Abner's men, but only nineteen of David's. He buried all the dead on the field except the body of Asahel, which he carried to Bethlehem and deposited in the sepulchre of his relatives.

THE TREACHEROUS ASSASSINATION OF ABNER.

The battle at Gibeon was only the beginning of long protracted internecine strife, in which the power of David gradually increased, while that of Saul's son, the pretender, as surely diminished. David did not lead his army in these conflicts, trusting the execution of his plans to Joab, in whom he reposed the greatest confidence.

About this time, or three years after he had been proclaimed king at Hebron, David had become the father of six sons by as many mothers. The eldest of these was by his first wife Ahinoam, and was named Ammon; the second was by his wife Abigail, and called Chileab; the third was Absalom, by his wife Maacah, who was the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; the fourth he named Adonijah, by his wife Haggith; the fifth was called Shephatiah, by Abital, and the sixth was Ithream, by Eglah.

The increasing strength of David so alarmed Abner, whose course had been that of a traitor to the lawful king by God's appointment, that he determined to gain his favor before a final victory might place him within David's power. Accordingly, he sent overtures to David, first reciting some of the insults he had received from Ish-bosheth, and proffering his aid to the establishing of his undisputed power over all Judah. Before agreeing to treat with him David required of him first to restore his wife Michal, whom Saul had given to Phaltiel, as already explained. This Abner succeeded in doing through an order from Ish-bosheth, and then treated with the elders of Israel, through

whom he persuaded the tribe of Benjamin to acknowledge David, because of his designation by Jehovah and of his services against the Philistines.

So well did his league with David succeed that he determined upon going in person to Hebron, accompanied by a guard of only twenty men, to pay his homage to the lawful king. He was received by David with every mark of respect and consideration, being feasted with all the good things that could be found, and honored with great promises of preferment; so that when he departed it was with an expressed resolution to gather all Israel to David's standard.

Abner had not gone above a few miles from Hebron when Joab returned to the city from a successful expedition against some foraging Bedouins, and learning that David had treated with him as a friend, was so enraged in his remembrance of the death of Asahel that he sent messengers in the name of David to tell Abner to return, as he had some more important matters to consult with him about. Abner, suspecting nothing wrong, rode back to Hebron, but was met at the gate by Joab, who received him with evidence of much kindness. Upon the pretense of a desire to speak with him secretly, Joab and Abishai led Abner apart from his guard behind a gate, where they foully murdered him. Josephus tells us that this treacherous act was committed by Joab, not because of revenge for Asahel's death, but because he feared that Abner would supplant him in the favor of David and become the king's chief officer.

DAVID LAMENTS FOR ABNER.

When David learned of the assassination of Abner he was exceedingly grieved, not so much for the loss of a new ally, who would be of great service in establishing the kingdom, as because his honor had been compromised by the act; for Abner was ostensibly under the royal protection and had been promised the king's favor. To relieve any impression which might obtain that he secretly sanctioned the murder, David called all his people as witnesses and appealed to God for an affirmation of his condemnation of the act. He also called down curses upon those who committed the crime, and then ordered that there be a public lamentation for the dead and that the body be accorded all the honor due to one occupying an exalted station. As a still further evidence of his extreme sorrow, David put on sackcloth and followed the bier, with all the elders and rulers of his kingdom, and had the remains deposited in a magnificent sepulchre in Hebron, over which he indited funeral elegies.

The sorrow and respect manifested by David procured for him the favor of the people, particularly those who had joined their fortunes to Saul's son, and the affair therefore did great credit to David's judgment, for it gave him the confidence of those who had been his enemies and did more toward establishing his kingdom over all Judah than a hundred great victories in war would have done. David would have gone further and requited the murder, except that this power was wanting; for he says, "God, who hath regard to all men's

others of this tribe refused to acknowledge David, expecting a new ruler from the house of Saul to succeed Ish-bosheth; of the tribe of Ephraim there were 20,800, all mighty men of great valor and eminent for strength; of the half tribe of Manasseh came 18,000 of the most potent men; of the tribe of Issachar there came 200 who were gifted with the foreknowledge of events and 20,000 warriors; of the tribe of Zebulun were 50,000 chosen men, which was the only tribe that came universally to acknowledge David; of the tribe of Naphtali there came 1000 eminent men and rulers, besides 37,000 others of the tribe; of the tribe of Dan there were 27,600, and of the tribe of Asher there were 40,000. Beside these came those from the two tribes east of Jordan (Reuben and Gad), and of the tribe of Manasseh, who used shields, spears and swords, 120,000, making a total of 357,200 armed men. All these came together at Hebron to David, bringing vast quantities of corn, wine and other fruits as offerings to their king, and here David was crowned king of Israel, after which event there was a great feast and rejoicing for a period of three days.

DAVID LAYS SIEGE TO JERUSALEM.

Finding himself now strong in the affections of his people, and at the head of an army almost invincible by reason of its vast numbers and unison of sympathy and purpose, David resolved to change the seat of government from Hebron to a city more central and accessible to the commerce of the several tribes, while at the same time other necessary advantages, in case of war, were not overlooked. It is but natural that his choice should fall on Jerusalem, which was the largest and strongest city in all Palestine, but in the possession of the Jebusites. In the days of Joshua the advantages of Jerusalem had been well understood, and at that time a desperate attempt was made to capture the place. That portion of the town situate in the valley had surrendered to Joshua, but the city proper, that was built upon a hill, resisted all the efforts of the mighty men of Judah, and had continued in the hands of the Jebusites.

David marched at the head of his army against the great city of Jerusalem with composure and confidence in his ability to effect its capture, notwithstanding its reputed impregnability; his confidence, indeed, exceeded that of proper discretion, as the circumstances afterward proved. He directed his first attack against the lower city, which, being feebly garrisoned and slightly protected, soon capitulated; but the citadel on top of the hill held out and repulsed so many attempts to scale the walls that, at length, in derision of David's efforts, the Jebusites manned the walls with those that were sick, lame and blind, shouting to the besiegers that these were sufficient to overcome the Israelites. Infuriated by these taunts, David encouraged his army to superhuman exertions by the offer of large rewards, but all to no purpose, until he finally proffered the command of his entire army to the one who would first pass the ditches and ascend over the wall. This offer was so

tempting that many hundreds tried with reckless desperation to win the honor and distinction, but were sent, one after another, headlong back from the walls, till the ditches were nearly choked, and certain death appeared to wait on all who made the effort. There was one, however, whom fortune favored, who managed to guard against the shafts flung at him, and, by prodigious effort and valor, finally gained the citadel, and standing aloft on the walls claimed the command as had been promised. This great warrior was Joab, who had



SIEGE OF JERUSALEM—SHOWING ANCIENT WEAPONS OF WAR.

dishonored David by the murder of Abner, and upon whom now fell the office of chief commandant of Israel. He was soon followed by other brave men, and a breach being effected the army poured into the city and put the Jebusites to the sword. This was the first capture of Jerusalem, effected after a fight scarcely less desperate than that which took place more than two thousand years afterward, when Saladin, the Moslem conqueror, wrested the city from the Christians after a siege of twelve days.

REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM.

The attack upon and sack of Jerusalem by the Israelites so nearly destroyed the city, or left it in such confusion, that when David had made him-



JOAB MOUNTING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

self secure he set about repairing and rebuilding the place, and changed its name to that of *The City of David*, for it was his desire to rule here all the days of his life. David was thirty years of age when first proclaimed king, and his rule at Hebron was for a period of seven and one-half years, so that

at the time of the capture of Jerusalem he was still a comparatively young man, but he had long before proved the possession of remarkable resource, both in conception and execution, in civil and military affairs. In the rebuilding of Jerusalem, he again manifested the great sagacity and craft with which he was endowed. Understanding the importance of perfect defenses to the lower portion of the city, which previous occupants had utterly failed to consider, he caused a strong wall to be built around it, and so arranged the building that there was a safe connection between the lower city and the citadel, thus making it a compact city, where, before, the lower portion, being detached and ill-defended, served as a lodgment for an enemy who, by occupying it, could be safely housed for a siege against the citadel, or upper city.

Five hundred and fifteen years had elapsed since Joshua divided the land among the twelve tribes, and in all this time Jerusalem (formerly called Salem, before the days of Melchizedec, and after Abraham Jireh-Salem, hence its present designation, meaning, "*the Lord will see and provide*,") had remained in possession of the Canaanites until David, strengthened by God, effected its capture. The consequence of this triumph did not terminate with the mere possession of the city, but its influence was wide-extending and had the happiest effect of largely increasing David's power. Tyre was a kingdom adjoining Palestine on the west, and was ruled over at the time by the most powerful potentate of the then known world, whose name was Hiram. This king had carried terror among all the nations with whom he was ever engaged in war, but the capture of Jerusalem, regarded for so many centuries as being absolutely impregnable, spread the fame of David so greatly that Hiram immediately desired him for an ally. He accordingly sent ambassadors to the new city of David, and made a league of mutual friendship with the Israelites, by which the power of David was so strengthened that no nation now dared to incur his ill-will.

DAVID COMMITS A GREAT SIN.

The possession of great power almost invariably reacts dangerously upon the possessor, since it promotes vanity and undue exaltation that prompt to the most extravagant conceits and follies, leading finally to disaster. So it proved with David; though a man of excellent judgment, when great responsibility required its exercise, the enlargement of his powers and the security of his present situation caused him to become careless of his honor and dignity, and he abandoned himself to the lowest craving of his nature.

Though already married to six wives, which was apparently no sin, as polygamy was then general, David established a very harem, which he filled with concubines, to whose dalliances he devoted his time to the neglect of his royal duties, and his respect for God's laws. How many wives he had we are not told, for he took many others beside the six already mentioned, and by whom he had nine more sons, named respectively, Amnon, Emnos, Ebon, Nathan, Solomon, Jeban, Elien, Phalna and Emnaphen. By his concubines he

had two sons, named Eliphalet and Jenai. Afterward he took other wives and ten more concubines, who bore him as many sons.

David's excesses brought upon him the anger of God, who surrounded him with enemies that he might be brought to realize the sinfulness of his living. The manner in which he was punished will appear hereafter.

THE PHILISTINES WAR AGAIN WITH DAVID.

Sometime after David had been proclaimed king of all Israel, and had fallen somewhat into disrepute by reason of his immorality, the Philistines gathered together a great army, and came to attack him at Jerusalem. They took possession of the Valley of the Giants, which is near the city, and there pitched their tents to prepare for a siege. David, somewhat fearful of the result, now realizing the wickedness of his conduct, prayed to Jehovah for forgiveness; but not being sure that his prayer would be heard, commanded the high-priest to foretell the will of God, and what would be the result of the battle. Jehovah, though offended, did not abandon David, but promised to give him the victory. The fight soon took place, in which David came upon the Philistines by ambush, and defeated them with small loss to himself. But though the Philistines retreated without showing any courage, they speedily reorganized, and securing help from Syria, Phœnicia and other nations, they raised an army three times greater than that of David, and pitched their camp as before, in the Valley of the Giants. Being again in doubt as to the issue of the battle, David prayed to God as before, and also sent the high-priest to inquire whether Jehovah would give him the victory.

The prophecy was again favorable, but he was directed to assemble his army in a grove near the enemy's camp, called the Grove of Weeping, and not to sally out from this ambush until a wind should spring up and disturb the trees. David repaired to the place designated and there remained with his army until he perceived the trees bending under pressure of a strong wind; he now rushed out and fell upon the enemy with such suddenness and impetuosity that they retreated with scarcely a show of resistance. The Israelites pursued them for several days, slaughtering great numbers, until the Philistines were driven to Gaza, by the sea, which was the limit of their country.

DAVID BRINGS UP THE ARK TO JERUSALEM.

The decisive victories which David had gained over his enemies made him desirous of manifesting thanks to God, of proving his disposition to do that which was holy instead of following in evil ways; therefore, after despoiling the Philistines of their riches and breaking their idols, he returned to his city, and selecting a large number of soldiers from the flower of his army, and taking many priests and Levites, he set out to bring the ark, which had for several years, indeed, since its restoration by the Philistines, rested at Kirjath-jearim with the family of Abinadab, to Jerusalem, that he might sacrifice to

it as the symbol of Jehovah's presence. Accordingly, this new army proceeded to Kirjath-jearim, and bringing out the ark, they put it upon a cart and both cart and oxen started drawing it toward Jerusalem. Before the ark marched David and a great multitude, singing hymns to God and playing musical instruments. As the procession reached a place called Chidon, where there was a threshing floor, a singular and melancholy accident occurred, by which Jehovah's presence was manifested. In passing over some rough ground the cart was all but upset, and to save the ark from such a catastrophe a man named Uzzah put out his hand to save it, when on the instant he was struck dead. This was in accordance with the law, by which any person, save that of a priest, who might touch the ark should perish for his rashness.

It seems most probable that this explanation is a correct one, for David evidently so construed it. He was much frightened by Uzzah's singular death, and bade the people to leave the ark at the house of a righteous man named Obededom, where it remained for three months, and until David could arrange to have it transported to Jerusalem in a manner which he thought would please God.

During the time that the ark was in the keeping of Obededom it brought to him many blessings, elevating him from a position of extreme poverty to one of competence and happiness. When the time arrived for its removal, David, who now perceived that the ark was calculated to increase the prosperity of its keeper, repaired to the house of Obededom with many priests, who took it upon their shoulders and again started for Jerusalem, preceded by seven companies of singers, while David himself played upon a harp and manifested exuberant joy. His demonstration excited the derision of his wife Michal, Saul's daughter, who afterward wished him all possible happiness, but could not refrain from taxing him with unseemly actions in dancing and uncovering himself before the multitude.

The ark was brought in safety to Jerusalem and deposited in a tabernacle which David had prepared as its depository, after which he offered costly sacrifices and peace-offerings, and gave to each of the great number who rejoiced with him a loaf of bread and two cakes, together with portions of the sacrifice.

DAVID PROSECUTES A WAR FOR SPOILS AND CONQUEST.

After the removal of the ark to Jerusalem David prospered in all things, giving the credit to Jehovah's presence, who was now always with him. This success made him anxious to prove his worthiness and appreciation, to do which he resolved to build a more worthy repository for the sacred object than the tent in which it was kept. He mentioned this intention to the prophet Nathan, by whom the project was highly commended; but during the same night Jehovah came to Nathan in a dream, commanding him to tell David to forego this intention, as he should first establish his kingdom and leave to his son, who would be chosen to rule hereafter, the duty of providing a suitable house for the ark.

David contented himself with what God had ordered through Nathan, and then set about extending his kingdom, to conducting a war of subjugation and for spoils. He now attacked the Philistines and captured their chief frontier city, Gath, and continued driving his enemies until he had made himself master of all of southern Palestine to the "river of Egypt." He next turned toward the eastern frontier and overran Moab, two-thirds of whose people he ordered put to death, and the remainder laid under tribute. This vengeance on the part of David is unaccounted for, and can scarcely be credited, since it was to the Moabites he committed the care of his father and mother when he was first forced to flee from Saul, as already related. There is an old Jewish tradition to the effect that his parents were murdered by the Moabites, but there is no record of the crime in the Scriptures.

After subjugating Moab David advanced toward the northeast, intending to extend his kingdom to the river Euphrates. Two Syrian nations lay between him and the river, one of which was ruled by Hadadezer, and the other by Hadad. He engaged the former near the Euphrates and speedily overthrew him, destroying twenty thousand of his foot soldiers, seven thousand horsemen, and took one thousand chariots, one hundred of the finest of which he reserved for his own use.

Hadad, king of Damascus, hearing of Hadadezer's defeat, who was his ally, raised a powerful army, and marched quickly to his friend's aid, coming up with David also beside the Euphrates. Here another great battle was fought, but with no less decisive results for David, who slew twenty thousand of Hadad's army and put the rest to flight.

These victories were followed by alliances with Toi, king of Hamath, and a renewal of the treaty with Hiram, so that David now held possession of nearly all of Palestine, besides gaining enormous spoils of gold, silver, jewels, arms, and everything that had been used by those with whom he fought. A portion of the plunder thus taken was dedicated to the service and building of the future temple.

DAVID ADOPTS JONATHAN'S SON.

In the hour of David's greatness he did not forget the memory of his dead friend Jonathan, to whom he had been joined in his early years with ties stronger than those of brotherhood. In the hours of his reflection he remembered the covenant he had made with Jonathan, and the desire came upon him to know if any of his friend's children were yet living, that he might show a kindness to them according to his promise. He therefore sent for a man who had been a servant to Saul, of whom he made inquiry concerning Jonathan's children. The servant told him that there was one child of his friend yet living, who was a cripple, having received his injuries by being dropped from his nurse's arms on the day of his father's death. David immediately sent for the young man, whose name was Mephibosheth, and when he was brought into the king's presence he bowed down very low and asked what was desired

of him. David raised the young man and assured him that no danger should befall him. He then explained to Mephibosheth that he desired to do a kindness to him for the sake of his father, who being dead, he should now find a home in his house and a father in himself. David then ordered that all the



MEETING OF DAVID AND MEPHIBOSHETH.

"And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king."—2 SAM. xix. 24.

land that had belonged to Saul should be given to the young man, who should thereafter eat at the royal table and be a member of the royal household.

DAVID'S WAR WITH THE AMMONITES.

The conquests of David had made him master of nearly all Palestine, and his power was greatly feared by all the neighboring nations yet he was not permitted to remain long in peace, for, by a curious incident, he was forced to go to war with one of his strongest allies, the Ammonites. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, having died, his eldest son succeeded him, a petulant, vain

and bigoted young man, wholly unfitted, by reason of indulgences in his youth, to assume so important a position. When David heard of Nahash's death he sent ambassadors to the young king, conveying messages of condolence and assurances of his wishes that the alliances made with Nahash should continue in effect.

The youthful king had several brothers who, to secure their own exaltation, should their schemes be consummated, advised their royal brother not to accept the assurances of David, whom they charged with having sent condoling messages to disguise his real intentions, which were to spy out the country and discover its weakness. The new king was so influenced by these declarations of his brothers that he abused David's ambassadors by ordering that they be shorn of half their beards, and that one-half of their clothes should be cut off. With this indignity he sent them out of his kingdom, not deigning to answer David's messages with any words. The result of this insult was a speedy declaration of war by David, who vowed an oath that he would be revenged.

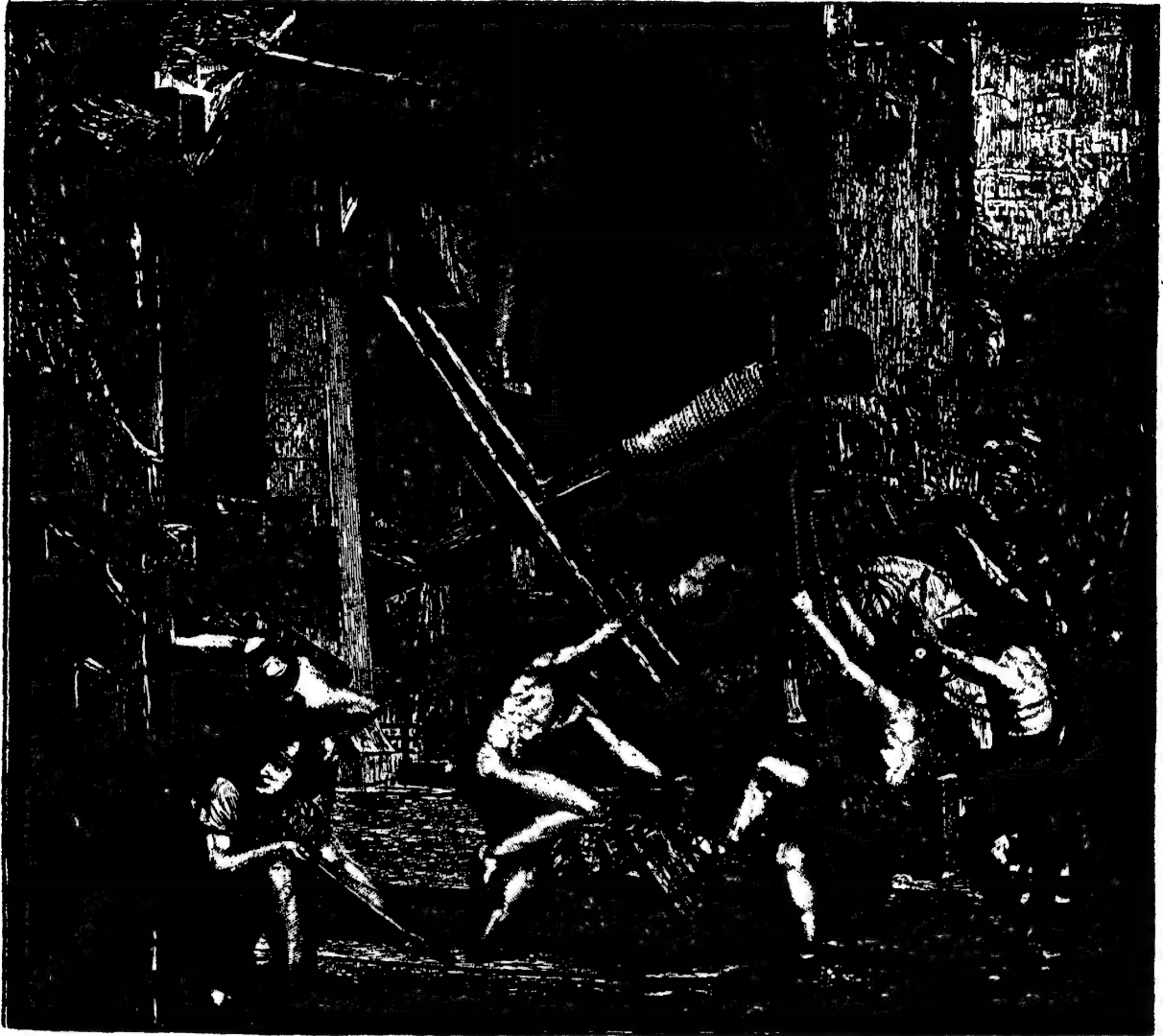
The Ammonites, though strong in war themselves, could not hope for a successful issue with David without help, so they sent a present of one thousand talents (equivalent to nearly \$2,000,000), to the king of Syria and Mesopotamia, who had twenty thousand soldiers, for his assistance, and they also hired the king of Maacah, whose soldiers were not enumerated, and also another king named Ishtob, who had twelve thousand armed men. With these forces and such as they themselves could muster, the Ammonites marched against the Israelites.

David had no reason to fear the result, for his army was well nigh invincible, so perfectly were his soldiers trained. He therefore ordered out only a portion of the forces at his command, with Joab as the leader, a position which he had held since the capture of Jerusalem.

DAVID'S GREATEST INIQUITY.

The Israelites pressed the Ammonites to their own city of Rabbah, the capital of Ammon, and here a decisive battle was fought, lasting nearly three days. During the progress of this war David committed the greatest sin of his life. While walking upon the roof of his house, late in the evening, he chanced to observe a very beautiful woman washing herself in a house near by. Being infatuated with her appearance, he sent a messenger to inquire who she was. By this means he discovered that her name was Bathsheba, and that she was the wife of Uriah, Joab's armor-bearer, who was with Joab fighting against the Ammonites. This information caused him to conceive a heinous plan by which he should become possessed of this comely woman either as wife or concubine. He accordingly sent word to Joab, ordering that Uriah be brought to him. When Uriah had answered the summons David received him with affected kindness and many pretensions of friendship, but

when he sent him back to the army, he wrote to Joab, secretly instructing him to procure the death of Uriah by advancing him to the forefront of the next battle, and then suddenly to abandon him that he might be slain by the enemy. All was done as David had commanded, and Uriah fell fighting at the gates of Rabbah, after proving himself to have been the most valorous



DAVID BESIEGING THE CITY OF RABBAH.

"And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it."

—2 SAM. xii. 29.

man of all Israel. We will presently see how God punished this monstrous act of David.

The battle, or siege of Rabbah, was vigorously contested, both sides losing so heavily that it was a very slaughter. Joab divided his forces so that a portion, under the command of Abishai, fought with the Ammonites, while he led

the rest of his army against the three mercenary kings. In thus fighting, the Syrians finally flanked Joab and for a time the indications were that Israel would lose the battle, but Joab's stratagems turned the tide when all seemed lost, and finally drove the enemy into their city. The Israelites laid siege to Rabbah for a time, but finally gave over the contest, being content with a bare victory, and returned to Jerusalem.

The manner in which they had withstood the assaults of Israel's army encouraged the Ammonites to renew hostilities, but not until they had largely increased their forces by the engagement of other mercenary kings. They accordingly sent to Chalamou, a Syrian king, whose nation was beyond the Euphrates, whom they persuaded, by the use of liberal rewards, to join them. This was a great accession, for he brought to the assistance of the Ammonites a force consisting of 80,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 cavalry.

When David heard how great an army his enemies had raised to attack him, he was somewhat concerned for the result, and instead of trusting to his officers, as before, he took command in person of his troops and pushed across the Jordan to meet the enemy on their own soil. A battle was soon precipitated, which resulted in a complete overthrow of the Ammonites and their allies, and the loss of 7000 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers, besides the death of the great Syrian leader, Shophach. The Syrians thus became tributary to David, and the power of the Ammonites was utterly broken.

NATHAN CONDEMNS DAVID IN A PARABLE.

When David returned from the war with the Ammonites he was confronted by Nathan, the prophet, whom God had instructed, in a dream, to reprove the king for the infamy of his action in causing Uriah to be slain. Resolving not to expose himself to the anger of David, which would certainly be excited by openly accusing him of his crime, Nathan engaged him in a good-natured conversation, which he artfully changed after a short time, and asked the king's opinion of what punishment should be given to one guilty of such an offense as the following:

"There were," said he, "two men, inhabiting the same city, the one of them was rich, the other poor. The rich man had a great many flocks of cattle, of sheep, and of kine; but the poor man had only one ewe lamb. This he brought up with his children, and let her eat her food with them; and he had the same natural affection for her which any one might have for a daughter. Now, upon the coming of a stranger to the rich man he would not vouchsafe to kill any of his own flocks, and thence feast his friends; but he sent for the poor man's lamb, and took her away from him, and made her ready for food, and then feasted the stranger."

This complaint of Nathan's aroused the keenest sympathy of David, who denounced the rich man as the basest of criminals, and declared that he should

first be required to restore the lamb fourfold, after which he should be executed as one unworthy to live among God's creatures.

When the king had somewhat spent his rage, with maledictions upon the rich man, Nathan arose, and pointing his finger at David, in a stern voice said: "Thou art the rich man who hath committed this crime." When the king would have remonstrated Nathan rehearsed to him the infamy of his act with Bathsheba, and how he had ordered that her husband be slain in order that he might indulge his base and lecherous propensity. But Nathan did not content himself with a mere denouncement of the king's monstrous crime, but employed the occasion to remind him of God's provident care in raising him from the humble and lowly position of shepherd to be king of the Jews, and had enlarged his kingdom by numerous manifestations of His divine favor and power. For these blessings he accounts himself under no obligations, and even turns against Jehovah with acts of iniquity and disgrace. Nathan then threatened David with God's anger, for it was unreasonable to suppose that He would take



"THOU ART THE MAN!"

"And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man."—2 SAM. xii. 7.

no account of a crime so monstrous; therefore the prophet pronounced against David a curse wherein a bitter punishment would lie; that his harem should be broken up, his wives disgraced, and that he should be supplanted by a son begotten in iniquitous relations with one of his wives; moreover, he prophesied that the offspring of Bathsheba would speedily languish and die.

When David had heard all that Nathan was ordered by God to tell him, he was overcome with grief and remorse, discovering now the enormity of his sin, and he prayed for compassion with such earnestness that God finally pro-

mised to preserve to him his life and kingdom. But the Lord could not wholly forgive David's great fault, and that the measure of his punishment might be complete the child born of Uriah's wife to the king was stricken with disease and soon died, as Nathan had predicted.

When David first learned that the child was sick, remembering what Nathan had declared, he clothed himself in a black garment and lay down upon the floor of his room, where he remained seven days, refusing food and praying God for its recovery. When the child was dead the servants refused to tell him, fearing that any increase of his present grief might cause him to prolong his fast until he should starve to death. But David discovered, by the actions of his servants, that a fatal issue had resulted, and being so informed when he had commanded that they should tell him, instead of relapsing into greater grief, he rose up and washed himself, after which he put on a white garment and ordered supper to be brought. While he was eating, some of the company perceiving how great a change had come over him, ventured to inquire why, when the child was ill his grief was uncontrollable, while now that it had just died, he should put aside his grief entirely. To this inquiry David made reply in the most memorable and hopeful of all words: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." This expresses his belief in the final resurrection, and is the most direct and implicit reference to that life beyond the grave that is made in all the Old Testament.

David explained to those who attended him that while his child lay sick he prayed to God, in the anxieties of his heart, for its recovery; but now that it was dead grief could not restore its life, and it was becoming in him that he should accept the Lord's decree without murmur. This contrite spirit gained for him the favor of God, who comforted him with forgiveness and new assurances, and also by another proof of his continued care, for when Bathsheba had been joined to David in lawful wedlock God gave to him another child, who was afterward the glory of his kingdom. This child was named Solomon (*peace*), whom Nathan also called Jedidiah, which signifies in the Hebrew, *Beloved of Jehovah*, and for whom the prophet predicted the most wonderful things, chief of which was that through him should come the promised Messiah.

DAVID ANNIHILATES THE AMMONITES.

Very soon after the birth of Solomon, Joab was sent again against the Ammonites, at the city of Rabbah, and after capturing the first defenses and cutting off the city's supply of water, rested until David came to his assistance at the head of all Israel. After a siege of a few days the city capitulated and was followed by one of the most cruel massacres of which history gives an account. The sacred narrative tells us that "David brought out the people, and put them under saws, and harrows of iron, and axes, and made them pass through the brick-kiln, to their grim idol." The terrors of these tortures can scarcely be pictured, and are too painful to be dwelt upon. Of

the spoils which he captured little is said except that he deposited them in the ark of the Tabernacle. There was captured at the time, however, in addition to the other spoils, a so-called sacred crown weighing a talent ($93\frac{3}{4}$ pounds) of gold,* which was set with precious stones. This was worn by the idol Moloch, which the Ammonites worshipped, but David did not eschew it, nor consider it any profanation to wear it upon his own head, for we are told that he took the crown for his own royal vestment. Other cities of the Ammonites also fell into David's possession, and their inhabitants were as cruelly sacrificed to his anger as were those of Rabbah.

AMNON CONCEIVES A PASSION FOR TAMAR.

Though God forgave David for the sin of causing Uriah to be slain, he did not choose to forego the punishments which Nathan had prophesied, and we shall soon see how great a judgment was sent upon him, fulfilling all that the prophet had foretold.

Among the several children that were born to David by his many wives and concubines there were four who became conspicuous in Bible history, viz.: Amnon, Tamar, Absalom and Solomon. Others are mentioned, but not so often, nor in connection with such important incidents as these four. Amnon was the eldest, having been born of his first wife, while Tamar was an illegitimate, or daughter of one of the king's concubines, but she grew up to be a woman famous for beauty and withal goodly in her deportment. The fascinations of Tamar inspired Amnon with an unholy passion for her, notwithstanding she was his half-sister. This love constantly grew greater until he contrived, through the advice of Jonadab, a kinsman, to have Tamar wait upon him, while he was pretending sickness, and taking advantage of her helplessness while they were alone, committed a great wrong which brought grief and disgrace upon her. As she went out from Amnon's presence, she covered her head with ashes and recited the violence of her half-brother in the streets until she was met by her brother Absalom. When she had told him of Amnon's conduct he bade her to leave off crying, and not to esteem the act of Amnon as being so disgraceful as she had declared. He thus comforted her and brought her to his house to live with him.

David was in due time told of Amnon's sinfulness, but on account of his great affection for this, his eldest son, he did not offer to punish him. Absalom, however, though controlling his anger, resolved to avenge his sister's wrongs, which he often attempted, but was unable to accomplish until two years had passed. He finally, to make an opportunity for his purpose, went up to Baal-hazor to shear his sheep, and while there gave a feast, to which he invited his father and kinsmen. They all accepted the invitation except David, and when the feast was at its height wine was introduced and drunk until all

* A foot-note to Josephus fixes the weight of this crown at seven pounds, and estimates that it could not have been greater, because David wore it upon his head perpetually.

were senseless with intoxication. Absalom's servants, as they had previously been instructed, now rushed into the room, and first creating great confusion in order to better disguise their purpose, fell upon Amnon with their swords and killed him. The other brothers, as soon as their condition would permit, gained their horses and fled away, intending to go directly to David, but were persuaded to tarry awhile at a neighboring town. Thus it happened that some one went to David and told him that all his other sons had been slain by Absalom. This news so greatly affected the king that he never attempted to inquire the cause of his sons' death, but fell upon the ground, tore his clothes and was fairly crazed with grief. Seeing him so inconsolable Jonadab ventured to suggest that it was possible the facts had been exaggerated and that his sons had not been slain, though he was inclined to believe that Absalom had procured the death of Amnon, for his crime to Tamar.

The brothers who had tarried by the way came to their father while Jonadab was trying to console him and reported how Amnon had been slain, whereupon David's grief was in no wise diminished, for his love for Amnon was greater than the affection he bore for any of his other sons except for Absalom.

DAVID BECOMES RECONCILED TO ABSALOM.

After the assassination of Amnon, Absalom fled to Geshur, over which his maternal grandfather was king, and remained with him for three years, when David sent Joab to induce him to return home. But when Absalom had come back to Jerusalem his father was still unreconciled, and bade him not to come into his presence, but to remain at a house which was occupied by his own family.

At this time Absalom surpassed in beauty all other men in his father's kingdom. Notwithstanding the hardships endured during the period of his exile, his fine appearance had not become impaired, for he still remained so comely that every one was attracted toward him. In his hair, however, lay his chief glory, for Josephus tells us that it grew so thick that it had to be cut every eighth day.

Absalom dwelt in Jerusalem for two years without seeing his father; for being a married man he remained at his own house and never ventured to call at the royal residence. His wife bore him three sons and one daughter, the latter being as famed for her beauty as was her aunt, Tamar. She afterward became the wife of Rehoboam, who was the son of Solomon, by whom she had a son who was named Abijah. We will hear further of this son in a future chapter.

Absalom became very much oppressed by reason of his father's coldness, and being unable to endure the suspense longer, he sent for Joab with the view of influencing him to prevail upon David to be reconciled to him. Joab promised to intercede for Absalom, but neglected for some reason to do so, and when the cast-off prince sent for him again he refused to come. To better

effect his purpose, therefore, Absalom ordered his servants to set fire to the fields adjoining Joab's, knowing that he would come to inquire the cause. When Joab came over to reproach Absalom the latter accused him of unfaithfulness, and then said: "I have found out this stratagem that might bring thee to us, whilst thou hast taken no care to perform the injunction I laid upon thee, which was this, to reconcile my father to me; and I really beg it of thee, now thou art here, to pacify my father as to me, since I esteem my coming hither to be more grievous than my banishment, while my father's wrath against me continues." Joab pitied the distress of Absalom, and immediately went to David with such excellent excuses for his son's conduct that he succeeded in fully reconciling the king. When at length Absalom came before his father he fell down on his knees and begged forgiveness of his offenses, which so moved David with compassion that he raised him up and gave him the kiss of reconciliation.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION AGAINST DAVID.

It appears very strange that Absalom should have felt such great grief by reason of his father's long refusal to receive him back to his royal and paternal favor, when we learn that within a short time after he had been restored to his father's confidence and love he began to plot a treason against the hand that had blessed him. Indeed, we are almost forced to conclude that Absalom's pretensions of anguish were intended to disguise a purpose he had conceived while sojourning with his grandfather, Talmai, in the land of Geshur.

There were two things specially favorable to Absalom's enterprise, one of which was his extreme beauty and suavity of manner, attractions which David himself could not resist; but the more important circumstance was the decreasing popularity of the king because of his numerous wives and concubines, and particularly the crime through which he secured Bathsheba for his wife. The people generally commended Absalom for assassinating Amnon, and held David accountable for bringing odium upon Israel by maintaining a harem that produced the natural consequences of domestic discord and crime. This feeling was greatest among the men of Judah, and was most openly expressed in Hebron, where he was first crowned.

Absalom began to put his treasonable designs into execution by first winning the affection of the people. He stood every day at the portal of his father's audience chamber; as those having business with the king came out, he would accost them with civility, and to those who failed to obtain favorable judgment on their causes he would make promises to intercede in their behalf. Besides this, he would kiss those in distress, and assure them if he should ever come into power to do them the fullest justice. By this means he rapidly increased his popularity and very soon had a large following upon whom he could depend when the time should come for an open announcement of his ambition. Knowing nothing of his purpose, David granted Absalom the great-

est indulgence, and provided him, at his request, with fifty armor-bearers and a considerable body of foot-runners, chariots and horsemen, ostensibly as an honorary guard, as befitted his station as a favorite prince of so powerful a potentate as was David. His popularity having been pretty well established, Absalom asked permission of his father to go up to Hebron, offering as an excuse his desire to sacrifice there according to a vow he had made while at Geshur.

David still suspected no evil, and freely gave his permission; so Absalom started with two hundred men who, though his followers, were unacquainted with his designs; but he sent out spies at the same time, whom he instructed to secretly inform the people of Hebron of his intentions, and to notify them that when a certain trumpet signal was given they should consider it as a proclamation that he had been crowned king.

Absalom not only induced a large number of the common people to join his standard, but also succeeded in winning over to his cause David's chief counsellor, Ahithophel, who, we suppose, was glad of an opportunity to oppose the king for the wrong done to Bathsheba, who was his granddaughter.

Absalom's plans succeeded so admirably that within a short while after entering Hebron, he had not only been proclaimed king, but had also raised an immense army, which he led against Jerusalem with the hope of taking the city and his father as well. When messengers came to David telling him of Absalom's intentions, and how all the hearts of the men of Israel were with him, the king was frightened and made immediate preparations to abandon Jerusalem, which he, no doubt, regarded as being filled with those who sanctioned Absalom's conspiracy.

When the king departed he left the city in charge of ten of his concubines, but why he chose to make these the custodians of his possessions the Bible does not tell us. There were still several faithful followers left him, among whom were the devoted six hundred who had shared his fortunes when Saul was so bitterly pursuing him for his life. As they fled they passed over Kidron and up the Mount of Olives and across to Jericho, thence to the wilderness, "crying with a loud voice" as they went.

When David reached the territory of Benjamin he was assailed by some of the friends of Saul, one of whom, Shimei, threw stones at him, and cursed him as a bloody man; insults which David would allow none of his soldiers to resent, esteeming his crimes as worthy of any punishment which God might see proper to inflict.

While resting on Jordan's banks for the night, weary with much travelling, David was warned by two messengers, who had escaped from Jerusalem, to cross the river at once, as Absalom's forces were hot in pursuit. This news proved true, for directly after entering the city, Ahithophel asked leave of Absalom to take 12,000 men and pursue after David, who, he claimed, might now be easily dispatched while weak and overcome with fatigue. This counsel

was highly commended, as Absalom was anxious to procure the death of his father, so as to prevent any dispute in the future as to who should rule all Israel.

The army would have been pushed forward at once, but for the advice of Hushai, who, being shocked by Absalom's depravity, interposed a stratagem to save the king. First secretly sending messengers to apprise David of his son's designs upon his life, should his plans miscarry, he went to Absalom and represented that the counsel of Ahithophel was unwise, since David was a cunning warrior, who had no doubt protected his retreat and had certainly set his soldiers in ambush in caves along the route he had taken, where to follow him would be sure to result in a defeat that would bring disaster to his ambition. He further counselled Absalom to first gather Israel together in a great army, and then assuming command himself, to overpower David, and thus make secure his claim to the throne. This advice Absalom followed, to the great mortification of Ahithophel, who, thus finding himself replaced as chief counsellor by Hushai, went at once to his native city, Giloh, and hanged himself.

When David was apprised of Absalom's design to pursue him, he crossed the Jordan and went to Mahanaim, where he was kindly received by Shobi, son of Nahash, and other Gileadites, who brought him all needful supplies and bade him rest with them. Here also a great number of people came to his assistance, which enabled him to organize a considerable army to resist the threatened invasion of his son.

DEATH OF ABSALOM.

Absalom was crowned king at Jerusalem, where he spent some time in peaceable possession of the throne, but being in constant dread of the return of David at the head of a large army, resolved now to follow the advice of Hushai. Accordingly, he drafted every man available for service in that part of Palestine, and conferring the command upon Amasa, a half-cousin of David, he set out in pursuit of David, crossing the Jordan and making first camp at Mount Gilead.

David prepared to receive Absalom's attack by dividing his army into three bodies, commanded, respectively, by Joab, Abishai and Ittai. Before joining battle David charged his officers and soldiers, particularly, not to harm Absalom, for his love for his erring son had not been diminished by his numerous acts of perfidy, and he would rather sacrifice his own life and crown than that any harm should come upon the head of Absalom.

The two armies became engaged in the "forest of Ephraim," and a great battle was fought throughout the entire day, in which Absalom's army was routed with a loss of 20,000 men, a larger number of whom perished in the defiles of the forest, being unable to extricate themselves. Absalom sought to retreat on a mule, but the animal ran beneath the bough of a tree upon which

his luxuriant hair caught and left him suspended, and from which he tried in vain to release himself. Some of David's men, in pursuing the fleeing enemy, came up to Absalom, but spared his life because of David's command; instead of releasing him, however, they went quickly and told Joab, who returned with ten armor-bearers and thrust three javelins into the helpless man's heart. Joab now sounded the trumpet of recall, and taking down the body of Absalom cast it into a pit, over which he raised a pile of stones as a mark of execration.

DAVID LEARNS OF ABSALOM'S DEATH.

When the victory was complete Joab sent a messenger to inform David of the result, but cautioned him against saying anything concerning Absalom's death. In the mean time, however, David had sent his own special messenger,



JOAB KILLING ABSALOM.

"And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom."—2 SAM. xviii. 14.

Ahimaaz, to inquire how the battle had gone, and especially to know if Absalom was safe. David sat at the gate of Mahanaim awaiting the return of his messenger; breathless with anxiety and forebodings of bitter woe. The watchman on the tower at length announced the rapid approach of a runner, followed

directly after by another, whom he perceived by his gait must be Ahimaaz. This inspired David, who believed, by the manner of their running, that they must be bearers of good news. The first messenger came forward with open hands and beaming face to inform the king of his victory, but David's first inquiry was, "Is the young man, Absalom, safe?" The runner evaded the question by speaking of a confusion which was in the camp when he left. Ahimaaz now flew toward him with expressions of congratulation, to which the king made no reply, but eagerly asked if Absalom was safe. To this Ahimaaz responded, "The enemies of my lord, the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man!"

The full horror of this news burst suddenly upon David, the pathetic grief which followed being thus beautifully described by the inspired writer: "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate

and wept; and as he went, thus he said: O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

The distress of David was so great that he refused to see any one, or to show himself to his victorious troops, who expected some recognition of their success and valor. When at length they began to murmur at his seclusion, Joab forced his way to the king and loudly upbraided him for giving himself over to grief for his bitterest enemy, and for holding aloof from those who had preserved him. When this argument failed to move him, Joab threatened to persuade the people to leave him and give the kingdom to another, and to make him grieve thereby more bitterly, if he did not cease his lamentations and go before the soldiers, who desired an expression of his favor. This threat aroused David from his melancholy, and he went out and sat by the gate to receive the salutations of his people.

DAVID REMITS THE OFFENSES OF HIS ENEMIES.

The soldiers mourned with David for the death of Absalom, but the affairs of state required that he should, as speedily as possible, resume the throne and set about restoring the country to peace and prosperity. He was therefore conducted back to Jerusalem, but while on his way several of those who had espoused the cause of Absalom came before him to ask forgiveness. One of these was Shimei, who threw stones at him when the king was retreating from Jerusalem. Abishai begged David to kill this man for his offenses, but to this importunity the king replied: "Will you never leave off, ye sons of Zeruiah? Do not you, I pray, raise new troubles and seditions among us, now the former are over; for I would not have you ignorant that I this day begin my reign, and therefore swear to remit to all offenders their punishments, and not animadvert on any one that has sinned. Be thou therefore of good cheer, O Shimei, and do not at all fear being put to death."

It was thus that David gave a full pardon to all those who had joined in Absalom's rebellion, believing that such a course would most speedily secure the adherence of those who had been against him. But his generosity was the direct cause of another uprising, for the Benjaminites were displeased at his actions, and especially angered at the men of Judah, who having been the first to give their allegiance to Absalom, were also the first to receive and convey David back to Jerusalem; so that a dispute arose, the desire of the Benjaminites being to punish the Judahites, or to shut them out from the benefits of Israel. This dispute finally led Sheba, a Benjaminite, to proclaim war. Taking advantage of the furious passions excited, he blew his trumpet and shouted, "Every man to his tent, O Israel!"

Learning of the trouble, which grieved David greatly, he appointed Amasa, as an evidence of his desire for reconciliation, a commander of his army, to succeed Joab, and instructed him to muster the forces of Judah within three days to crush the revolt of the Benjaminites. Amasa went, promising to per-

form the duty assigned him, but when he got into the camp of Judah he refused to muster the men. David now sent Joab and Abishai to suppress the uprising of the Benjaminites. They proceeded to Gibeon and there met Amasa with the main army. Under a pretense of great friendship Joab embraced Amasa, but while so doing he thrust a dagger into his heart, and then pressed on after Sheba, who fled north adding recruits as he went until he came to Abel of Beth-maachah at the head of the Jordan River. Here he made a stand and was soon besieged by Joab. The investiture of the city being complete,



JOAB ASSASSINATING AMASA.

"Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand."

—2 SAM. XX. 10.

and the citizens perceiving that there were no means for escape, were upon the point of surrendering and submitting themselves to the mercy of their captors, when a wise woman of the town contrived to secure an interview with Joab, by which she learned that the desire of the besiegers was to punish Sheba rather than those who were his followers. Accordingly, she induced the people to cut off Sheba's head and throw it over the wall to Joab, who now being satisfied raised the siege and returned to Jerusalem.

The assassination of Amasa by Joab was a greater crime than that of the murder of Abner, as already related, for in the latter case Joab had the small

excuse for his act that Abner had killed Asahel, his brother, though in self-defense. But Amasa was murdered for no other reason than that of the jealousy of Joab, aroused by his being superseded in the command of David's army.

BATTLES WITH THE PHILISTINE GIANTS.

David enjoyed only a short period of peace after Sheba's death, when he went to war with the Philistines, whose territory bordered on his kingdom. In the first battle David's army was victorious, but he came near receiving his death wound after the enemy had been dispersed. Being in personal command of his men he had pursued the Philistines until he had become separated from

his attendants, and being at length very tired he sat down to rest himself. While thus resting, one of the enemy who had been hiding came out of his place of concealment to attack the exhausted king. This man was a giant who bore a spear quite as large as was that of Goliath, and wore a breast-plate of chain work. He rushed upon David, but his great stature chanced to be observed by Abishai, who ran to his king's assistance just in time to receive the giant's stroke upon his shield. He now engaged the giant in a conflict with swords and slew him before David's eyes. This narrow escape admonished the king to accept the advice of his counsellors not to go any more into battle, and to intrust his leadership to good men of his selecting.

The Philistines soon after gathered at the city of Gazara and were there besieged by the Israelites. The victory here obtained

SIBBECHAI'S VICTORY OVER THE PHILISTINE WARRIORS.



was due to the remarkable courage and dexterity of Sibbechai, a Hushathite, who challenged and vanquished, single-handed, several of the most noted fighters in the Philistine army, who prided themselves upon being the sons of giants.

After their defeat at Gazara the Philistines made war again, and the two armies being brought up in battle array it was decided by mutual consent that the issue should be determined by an encounter between a champion chosen from among each army. Nephan, a kinsman of David, was selected to fight for Israel, and his adversary was "the stoutest of all the Philistines." The victory was on the side of Israel; but though the Philistines retired, they were not vanquished, and when they had changed their camp and set it up a short distance from that of the Hebrews, they sent another challenge to any one in the Jewish army to fight with the champion they offered to put forth. This defy was promptly accepted. The one chosen by the Philistines was a giant nine feet in height, and was distinguished also for having six toes on each foot, and as many fingers on each hand. Notwithstanding his great size and appalling aspect, Jonathan, the nephew of David, went out to meet him. They fought a furious battle, but Jonathan killed his mighty antagonist, thereby gaining a reputation as great as that of any other man who had ever fought for Israel.

DAVID IS PUNISHED FOR NUMBERING THE PEOPLE.

After the last war recorded with the Philistines, David reigned in tranquillity for a considerable time, during which he wrote many beautiful songs which we find printed in the book of Psalms. Josephus is of opinion that nearly all of these were written during this interval.

The dominant spirit of Israel being warlike, though there were no enemies threatening, David, at length, to employ his restless disposition, conceived the enterprise of subjugating some neighboring tribes, and to prepare for such a campaign he ordered that a census be taken of all the men in his kingdom capable of bearing arms. This order was given to Joab, who first refused to obey it, because he foresaw that David had in his mind some new enterprise of conquest; but when the order was repeated he undertook the duty, which was by no means a small one. Joab appointed census takers in all the several districts, but it was nearly ten months before the enumeration was completed. The result of the numbering showed that there were five hundred thousand available men of the tribe of Judah, and eight hundred thousand belonging to the other tribes, all of whom were capable of performing military service. The entire population of Israel must have been therefore about ten millions.

This enumeration of the people, for the purpose it was intended, greatly angered God, who perceived that David had become bloody minded, as Shimei had said, and He accordingly resolved to punish him. God's determination had been communicated to David in a dream, so that he had foreknowledge

that a visitation of Divine wrath was to be sent upon him, but knew not what character of punishment would be inflicted. In the prayers which he now offered up he freely acknowledged the crime he had contemplated, but begged for forgiveness.

In the morning David was visited by the prophet Gad, who announced to him God's purpose, but permitted him to choose one of three kinds of punishments, viz.: seven years of famine; three months of fighting in which his enemies should be invariably victorious; or three days of pestilence. David knew not which to choose, but upon being pressed with one of three alternatives he at length bowed himself in submission to the promised pestilence.

A few days thereafter God sent an angel over Israel to afflict the people with a pestilence, from which no less than seventy thousand men died within the time it was permitted to endure—three days.

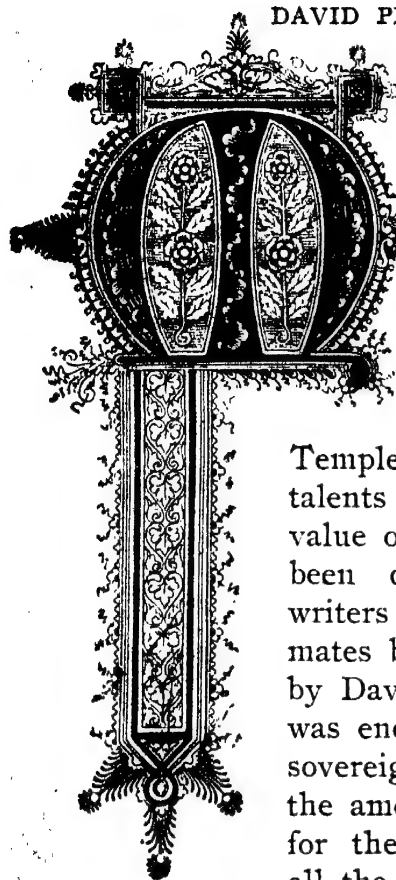
On the last day, as David was looking toward the point of Mount Moriah, he perceived an angel, as if suspended in mid-air, having a drawn sword, threatening the utter annihilation of Jerusalem. David and the elders of Israel now put on sackcloth, and the king bowed himself and prayed that God might sacrifice him, but to spare the people, who had not shared in his sin.

When Gad saw David humbling himself before God, he told him to go up to Mount Moriah, and there upon the threshing-floor of Araunah set up an altar to the Lord. In obedience to this command David went up, but when Araunah, who was at the time threshing wheat, saw the king coming he bowed himself and asked why he had come to his place. David answered that he had come to buy the threshing-floor upon which to build an altar for a burnt-offering to the Lord, that He might take away the pestilence. Araunah, hearing this, offered his threshing-floor as a gift, and also his oxen for a sacrifice, but David would not accept them, except that Araunah would take full payment. So David bought the threshing-floor, paying its full value, and built an altar, and when he had put an ox thereon God sent down fire from heaven to consume it, which was a proof that his sacrifice was acceptable. The pestilence was thus stayed on the evening of the third day.

CHAPTER XX.

DAVID PREPARES TO BUILD A TEMPLE TO GOD.

1 *Kings.*



MOUNT MORIAH (signifying *vision*) had become celebrated long before David had set up an altar there, for it was the identical spot upon which Abraham had built an altar to sacrifice his son Isaac. It was therefore now doubly holy ground, and David decided that it should be the site for a glorious temple to God, long contemplated in his mind. He had been preserving spoils captured from his enemies with which to build the

Temple, and these, we are told, now amounted to 100,000 talents of gold, and ten times as much silver. The exact value of the Hebrew talent of the time of David has never been determined, being variously estimated by Biblical writers at from \$1000 to \$1700, but if either of these estimates be correct, the value of the precious metals captured by David, to be devoted to the construction of the Temple, was enormous, greater, indeed, than the accumulation of any sovereign that ever ruled on earth. The probability is that the amount of David's treasure has been greatly exaggerated, for there is scarcely such an amount of silver now among all the commercial nations of the world.

Having chosen a site for the temple, thus miraculously pointed out, David procured the services of all the skilled workmen that could be found, either in his own kingdom or the foreign nations with which he had intercourse. These he employed to hew stones, and to prepare iron and brass for use in the construction, and sent to the Sidonians and Tyrians for the famed cedars of Lebanon, of which the wood-work was to be made. But after these preparations were begun, David was warned by God, through the prophet Nathan, that he should leave the construction to his son and successor, Solomon, as it was not becoming that a man who had shed so much blood as David should be either the designer or builder of a temple to be dedicated to Jehovah and peace. David recognized the justice of this denial and accordingly charged all the princes of Israel to help Solomon in the great work, and to give their hearts and souls to God.

ADONIJAH'S AMBITION TO SUCCEED DAVID.

Adonijah, the fourth and eldest surviving son of David, by his wife Haggith, had long aspired to the rulership of Israel, in succession to his father.

He was a man almost as distinguished for his beauty as had been Absalom, and was the recipient of quite as many indulgences, so that his expectations were natural. Therefore, when he learned that Solomon had been designated by David as the successor, he attempted to raise a rebellion and establish himself by force. He accordingly gathered a strong guard about him, including many charioteers and horsemen, and also won over to himself the services of Joab and Abiathar. Considering the time ripe for his enterprise, he gave a great feast at the rock of Zoheleth, near Enrogel, to which he invited many of his brothers, and others favorable to his schemes, who set up the cry, during the festival, "Long live King Adonijah."

News of the revolt speedily reached the prophet Nathan, and he immediately informed Bathsheba, mother of Solomon, whom he advised to see David at once and secure the interests of her son. This she did, and had the satisfaction of procuring an order from David for the immediate anointing of Solomon, which was performed by the priest Zadoc, with the sacred oil taken from the Tabernacle. When



KING DAVID—FROM THE FAMOUS PAINTING BY GUSTAVE MOREAU.

(This great picture represents David as the King and Poet, seated upon his throne and patiently, sadly waiting for the summons to "come up higher." The angel messenger sits at his feet, ready to give the summons when the hour has come. It is an impressive work, affording a study of the deepest interest to every Bible student.)

Solomon had thus been proclaimed king a great shout of rejoicing went up from the people, which frightened Adonijah so that he fled for safety to the horns of the altar in the sanctuary. Solomon, however, being a man of peace, had no desire to harm his brother, whom he now assured of safety, and bade him return to his house.

DAVID'S LAST CHARGE TO SOLOMON.

Soon after this event David called all the people together, to whom he now gave his final charge, knowing from his age and extreme feebleness that death was near at hand. He gave to Solomon, in the presence of his subjects, the plans of the Temple which he had designed, and also the money and materials that had been collected. A thanksgiving and prayer service was then held in honor of Solomon, who was now for a second time anointed king of Israel, and Zadoc proclaimed high-priest.

The last act of David, when he had become bed-ridden and felt the chill of approaching death, was to send for Solomon, whom he charged to keep the laws of Moses and to walk uprightly before the Lord in all things, who would magnify his power and glory above that of any other king who had ruled Israel. He told him also of the crimes of Joab, who had without just provocation murdered Abner and Amasa, and advised that he be punished according to his deserts. He also denounced Shimei as a man unworthy of confidence, but commended to Solomon's favor the good people who had so generously succored him when he had fled from Absalom to Mahanaim. Soon after completing this charge David, the greatest king of all Israel to the time of his successor, died, having reigned in all forty years, seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three in Jerusalem. He was buried in the City of David (Jerusalem) with great pomp, and his sepulchre was long a shrine at which the Jewish people came to weep and pray.

GOD'S GREATEST GIFT TO SOLOMON.

After the burial of David, God appeared to Solomon in a dream and asked him what gift he most desired, for whatsoever he should ask would be granted. The answer which he returned was a true index to his greatness and a prophecy of the success of his reign. To the time of his accession to the throne, all of Israel's rulers had been devoted to war, first of resistance and afterward of subjugation and spoliation, and none had pursued the profession of arms so industriously as David. Therefore we might suppose that Solomon would choose greatness, the overcoming of all enemies and a further extension of his power, but so far from inheriting ambition, he had been given a spirit of prudence with a degree of humility, so he prayed to God that he might be endowed with wisdom, which was accordingly given to him, with a promise also of a long life if he should show himself worthy.

SOLOMON CAUSES ADONIJAH AND JOAB TO BE SLAIN.

Though Solomon had come to the throne with acclamations of all the people, Adonijah did not give up all hope of gaining the coveted position, and sought in many ways to secure a following that would enable him to wrest the power from his brother. He conceived the infamous project of wedding one of his deceased father's wives, with the idea that such a marriage would give him the throne by right, and that his claim would then be acknowledged by the people. He therefore went to Bathsheba and begged her to intercede in his behalf, and obtain from Solomon consent for him to marry Abishag, a woman whom David had married in his declining years. In making this request Adonijah protested his love for Solomon, and declared that since God had ordained him to be king his own wish was to be a servant to his lord and brother all his days. Bathsheba did not discover the purpose which Adonijah had so speciously disguised, and though thinking the request a singular and improper one, went to Solomon and asked him to give his consent to the marriage of Adonijah with Abishag, supposing the desire proceeded from a natural passion.

Though Solomon had a great affection for his mother, to whom he promised to grant any request she might make, he perceived at once the object of Adonijah's desire, and horrified at the iniquity of the man, he ordered Benaiah, captain of the guard, to seize his infamous half-brother and slay him as unworthy to live to the disgrace of Israel.

When Joab heard of Adonijah's death he was greatly frightened, having been an instigator of the treasonable designs of Adonijah; and knowing that his actions and advice must be betrayed to the king, he fled to the sanctuary, hoping to find safety in the reverence which Solomon held for the sacred altar. But when Solomon was apprised of what Joab had done, he ordered Benaiah to pursue him and bring him to the judgment seat for trial. Joab, however, refused to leave the altar, still cleaving to it as his only hope of escape from punishment, which fact being told to Solomon, he ordered Benaiah to cut off his head where he stood. This order was promptly obeyed, and Benaiah was thereafter appointed to succeed Joab as commander of the whole army.

Shimei's punishment was not long delayed. Solomon, not desiring to put him to death, ordered him to build a house in Jerusalem and remain in the city, where he would not be molested, but if he passed over Kidron (Cedron) he should be slain. Solomon no doubt prohibited Shimei from going out of the immediate neighborhood for fear that if he were put under no restraint he would stir up trouble and possibly incite some of the people to rebellion, for it was evident he was not a trustworthy man. Shimei promised with an oath to observe the command, but three years afterward he left Jerusalem and went to Gath in pursuit of two of his servants, who had fled there. On his return Solomon had Shimei brought before him, and after reminding him of his oath

and also the insults he had heaped upon David, ordered Benaiah to kill him, which was accordingly done.

SOLOMON RESTORES A CONTESTED CHILD TO ITS MOTHER.

One of the first cases brought before Solomon for judgment, which must have been very soon after his accession to the throne, was one wherein two



SOLOMON ORDERING THE CHILDREN TO BE DIVIDED.

"And the king said, Divide the living child in two."—1 KINGS iii. 25.

women claimed to be mother to the same child, and disputed for its possession. The first to speak before the king made her complaint that she lived in the same house with the other woman before the bar, and that each had given birth to a child at the same hour, the resemblance of the two being so great that it was impossible to distinguish one from the other. She further

declared that during the night the woman of whom she complained had overlaid her child and killed it, and then taking its dead body had laid it in the place of the live child, which she had taken away and claimed as her own.

When the first woman had spoken Solomon asked that the second one be introduced to give her testimony. When she had come in she fell to crying and related to the king a story exactly similar to that which the first woman had told, except that she accused the first of overlaying her child and of then stealing her own. When these statements had been made, all those about the king wondered how a just judgment could be given, as it was impossible to decide which woman had sworn falsely. The difficulty, however, did not appear so great to Solomon, who ordered that the living and the dead child should both be brought to him, and when they were laid on a cloth before him he commanded one of his guards to take a sword and cut them both in twain, so that half of the living and half of the dead child might be given to each woman, it appearing, as he declared, that thus alone could he undertake to do justice to both. But when the guard was upon the point of destroying the live child the real mother cried aloud, begging the king to stay the hand of his officer and to give the child to the other woman, for she would rather be content with occasionally seeing her babe, even in the arms of her rival, than that it should be so cruelly killed. The other woman, however, insisted on having both children cut in two, as the king had ordered, by which cruel desire the king perceived who was indeed the real mother of the living child, and accordingly ordered that it be restored to her. He also condemned the other woman for her wickedness, but whether he visited her with any punishment the Bible does not state.

This manifestation of the great wisdom with which he was endowed inclined all the people to believe that the king was possessed of a divine mind. Concerning the abilities of this great man, Josephus thus writes:

Now the sagacity and wisdom which God had bestowed upon Solomon was so great that he exceeded the ancients, insomuch that he was no way inferior to the Egyptians, who are said to have been beyond all men in understanding; nay, indeed, it is evident that their sagacity was very much inferior to that of the king. He also excelled and distinguished himself in wisdom above those who were most eminent among the Hebrews at that time for shrewdness; those I mean were Ethan, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol. He also composed books of odes and songs, a thousand and five; of parables and similitudes, three thousand; for he spake a parable upon every sort of tree, from the hyssop to the cedar: and in like manner also about beasts, about all sorts of living creatures, whether upon the earth, or in the seas, or in the air; for he was not unacquainted with any of their natures, nor omitted inquiries about them, but described them all like a philosopher, and demonstrated his exquisite knowledge of their several properties. God also enabled him to learn that skill which expels demons, which is a science useful and sanative to men. He composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return, and this method of cure is of great force unto this day; for I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people, that were demoniacal, in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: He put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately, he adjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed. And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out.

of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man; and when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon was shown very manifestly: for which reason it is that all men may know the vastness of Solomon's abilities, and how he was beloved of God, and that the extraordinary virtues of every kind with which this king was endowed may not be unknown to any people under the sun.

BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

Solomon set about building the Temple, that was conceived by his father, soon after coming to the throne and immediately after the organization of his army. In this gigantic undertaking he was assisted by Hiram, king of Tyre, whose aid he solicited by letter. The Tyrians felled cedars and brought them by sea to Joppa, from whence they were carted by Solomon's men over the thirty miles of road to Jerusalem. For all this work a levy was made from among the people whom David had subdued, numbering one hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred men. These were appointed to certain tasks, seventy thousand being set to transporting cedars, eighty thousand were made hewers, and three thousand six hundred were appointed overseers. Beside these there were also thirty thousand Israelites engaged, who worked in Lebanon by relays of ten thousand, each of the three relays serving a month's time, and returning home they rested two months, when they renewed their work again. Some of these were also masons set to hew out large stones, which, being brought from Western Phœnicia, were very expensive when laid down, ready dressed, in Jerusalem.

The chief architect of the Temple was a man named Hiram, no relation of the king of Tyre, but a person whose skill was so great that his fame was known throughout Palestine. He was the son of a widow of Naphtali, and whose father had been a noted artist. This man was not only an architect but also a worker in brass, iron, gold, silver, stone, timber, and a designer in all branches. His greatest work in connection with the Temple was the building of two brazen pillars called Jachin and Boaz, which stood on either side of the porch in front of the Holy Place.

The Temple proper was erected inside of a walled enclosure, which formed a square of six hundred feet, and was planned after the model of the Tabernacle, being different chiefly in having chambers built about the sanctuary for the abode of priests and attendants, and also to keep the treasures. This sanctuary covered a space about one hundred and twenty by sixty feet, and the Tabernacle thirty by sixty feet, the latter covering just one-fourth the space of the former.

The Tabernacle was divided into three parts, as was also the Temple, called respectively the Porch, Holy Place, and Holy of Holies. The Porch was supported by Hiram's two brazen pillars, which stood nearly thirty-five feet high and were magnificently figured with imitations of lilies and pomegranates. The entire interior of the Temple was made of cedar overlaid with gold and occasionally set with precious stones, producing at once a sublime dazzlingly beautiful effect. Gold and silver were also lavishly used in the

exterior adornment of the building, and all the principal furniture of the Holy Place was of the more precious metal. Above the ark were placed the images of two cherubim, made of cedar laid with gold, whose wings extended above the ark till they touched, and also met at the walls behind them, their extreme

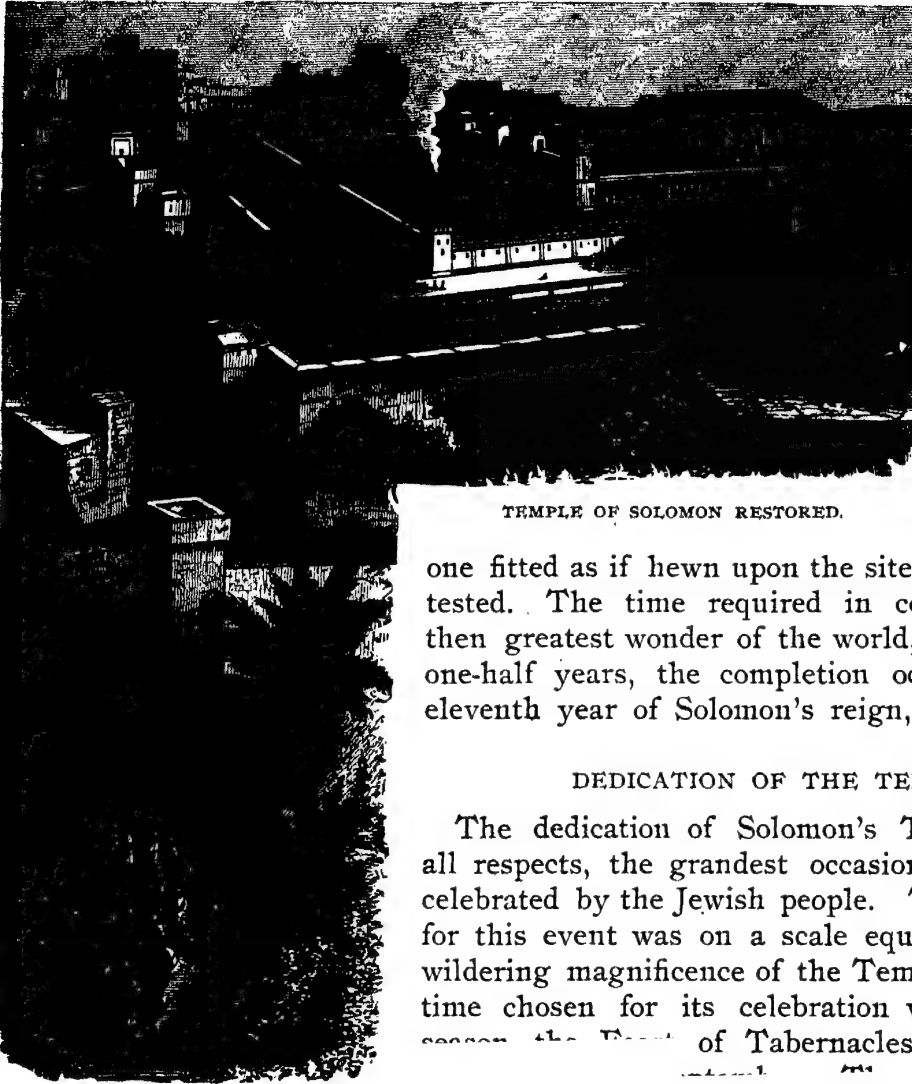


HIRAM SENDS MESSENGERS TO KING SOLOMON.

"And Hiram, king of Tyre, sent his servants unto Solomon: . . . For Hiram was ever a lover of David."—I KINGS v. i.

height being fifteen feet. The altar of incense was of cedar overlaid with gold, and the place was lighted with candles set in seven golden candlesticks. Besides these there were ten tables of gold upon which the shew-bread was set, and all the vessels used in the service were of beaten gold.

The outer court was scarcely less lavishly decorated and provided. The brazen laver which had so long done service for the priests, since the days of Moses, was now replaced by what was called "a molten sea of brass," which was supported upon the backs of twelve brazen oxen. This contained holy



TEMPLE OF SOLOMON RESTORED.

water for the ablution of the priests. Its size was eight feet in height and fifteen in diameter.

The Temple was made chiefly of stones cut at the quarries, which were cut so exactly that when brought to be laid every

one fitted as if hewn upon the site and frequently tested. The time required in constructing this then greatest wonder of the world, was seven and one-half years, the completion occurring in the eleventh year of Solomon's reign, B. C. 1005.

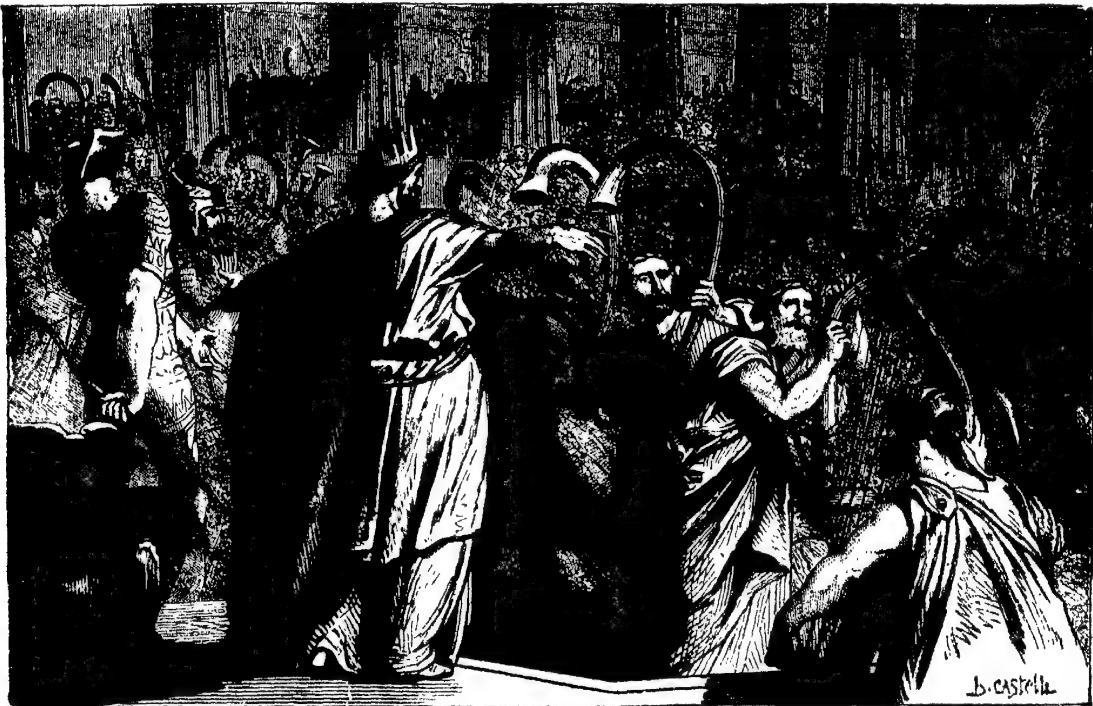
DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

The dedication of Solomon's Temple was, in all respects, the grandest occasion that was ever celebrated by the Jewish people. The preparation for this event was on a scale equal with the bewildering magnificence of the Temple itself. The time chosen for its celebration was the joyous season, the Feast of Tabernacles, corresponding

crops, which were plentiful that season, and in the exuberance of delightful spirits gathered from all parts of the kingdom to participate in the ceremonies. Solomon clothed himself in the priestly vestments worn by his father, but gave the ark in charge of the priests and Levites, to whom its care had been bestowed by the law of Joshua. When all had been made ready the full body of holy officers appeared to transfer the ark from its former resting-place to the new abode provided, beneath the wide-stretching wings of the cherubim and behind the holy veil. After thus depositing the ark,

as the priests came out the Levites arranged themselves in three courses of psalmody, clad in garments of white, and burst forth with the sacred chorus, accompanying their tuneful voices with instruments, and making the very world musical with their divine-like symphony. The joyful refrain was, "For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever."

God was near this holy scene, for at this moment, "just as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah," He gave the sign of His coming to take possession of His Temple. "The house was filled with a cloud, even the house of Jehovah, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of



SERVICES AT DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

Jehovah had filled the house of Jehovah." As that sacred cloud spread through the open doors over the sanctuary, the voice of Solomon was heard recognizing the presence of the God who had said that He would dwell in the thick darkness, and for whom he had now built a habitation forever. Then turning to the people from the great platform of brass, which he had erected in the midst of the court, in front of the brazen altar, the king blessed Jehovah, the God of Israel, who had chosen Jerusalem as the place sacred to His name, and had performed His promises to David and fulfilled his desire to build Him a house. And now, kneeling down before the whole congregation, with his face toward the sanctuary, Solomon poured forth a prayer unequalled for sublimity and comprehensiveness, in which the leading thought, repeated

with beautiful variety and minuteness is this: that the abode which Jehovah had deigned to sanctify with His presence, might prove the centre of blessing and forgiveness to His people; that whatever prayer for help, whatever penitent confession in the time of suffering and exile they might offer toward that house, God would hear it from His true dwelling-place in heaven, and forgive His people who had sinned against Him. The prayer is, indeed, a prophecy of the history of Israel, and of God's chastisement of their sins, even to the captivity. He concluded with a blessing and exhortation to the people.

The prayer of Solomon was followed by another sign of God's presence. The fire came down from heaven, as on the first altar of burnt-offering, and consumed the sacrifices, while the Shekinah again filled the house, preventing the entrance of the priests, as if, for that one day, God claimed the sanctuary as His very own, to the exclusion of all mere creatures. Then Solomon and all the people offered their sacrifices on the altar, 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep, the priests executing the office, while the Levites played and sang in their order and to the words of David. A great feast followed for twice seven days, seven for the Feast of Tabernacles, and seven for the dedication, and on the twenty-third day of the month Solomon dismissed the people. They returned to their homes, "glad and merry in heart for all the goodness that Jehovah had shewed unto David and to Solomon, and to Israel His people."

BUILDING OF THE KING'S PALACE.

When Solomon had finished and dedicated the Temple he set about constructing a palace which was little inferior in magnificence to the House of God, though he did not hasten the work as he did that on the Temple.

This palace, which took thirteen years to build, was about one hundred and fifty feet in length, seventy-five feet broad, and nearly fifty feet in height, supported by cedar pillars. It had folding doors, somewhat after the fashion of modern buildings, and its Corinthian roof and ceilings were elaborately frescoed. Josephus declares it to have been in many respects a very curious building, an observation no doubt prompted by the fact that it was never told how many rooms it contained, nor were the people given to know anything about the subterranean passages and dungeons which were built beneath it, except that such secret ways and rooms had been provided. Adjoining the main building was another erected for the habitation of Solomon's queen, and smaller structures for sleeping and dining. Some of these were built of stones fifteen feet square, and all their floors were laid in cedar. About the whole was a garden that must have exceeded in beauty those of Babylon. Among the ornaments scattered about the grounds were immense stones carved to represent trees and a great variety of plants, with such perfection, too, that Josephus tells us it was difficult to distinguish them from the real, the stone leaves being carved so thin as to appear to stir with every breeze.

The throne-room of Solomon's palace exceeded in grandeur and magnifi-

cence of furniture and embellishment all the other rooms or edifices excepting, possibly, that of the Holy of Holies in the Temple. He adorned the ceilings and walls with precious stones set in gold, which must have produced the most



THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON.

"And when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon . . . she came to prove him with hard questions."—I KINGS v. v

exquisitely beautiful effect. The throne itself he made of solid ivory, and it was so large that it had to be ascended by a flight of six steps. At the end of each step was the figure of a lion of life size, though of what material we are not told. In the back of the throne-seat were fixed the mechanical hands, which,

Josephus says, came out to receive the king as he sat down, but his back rested on the figure of a bullock of gold.

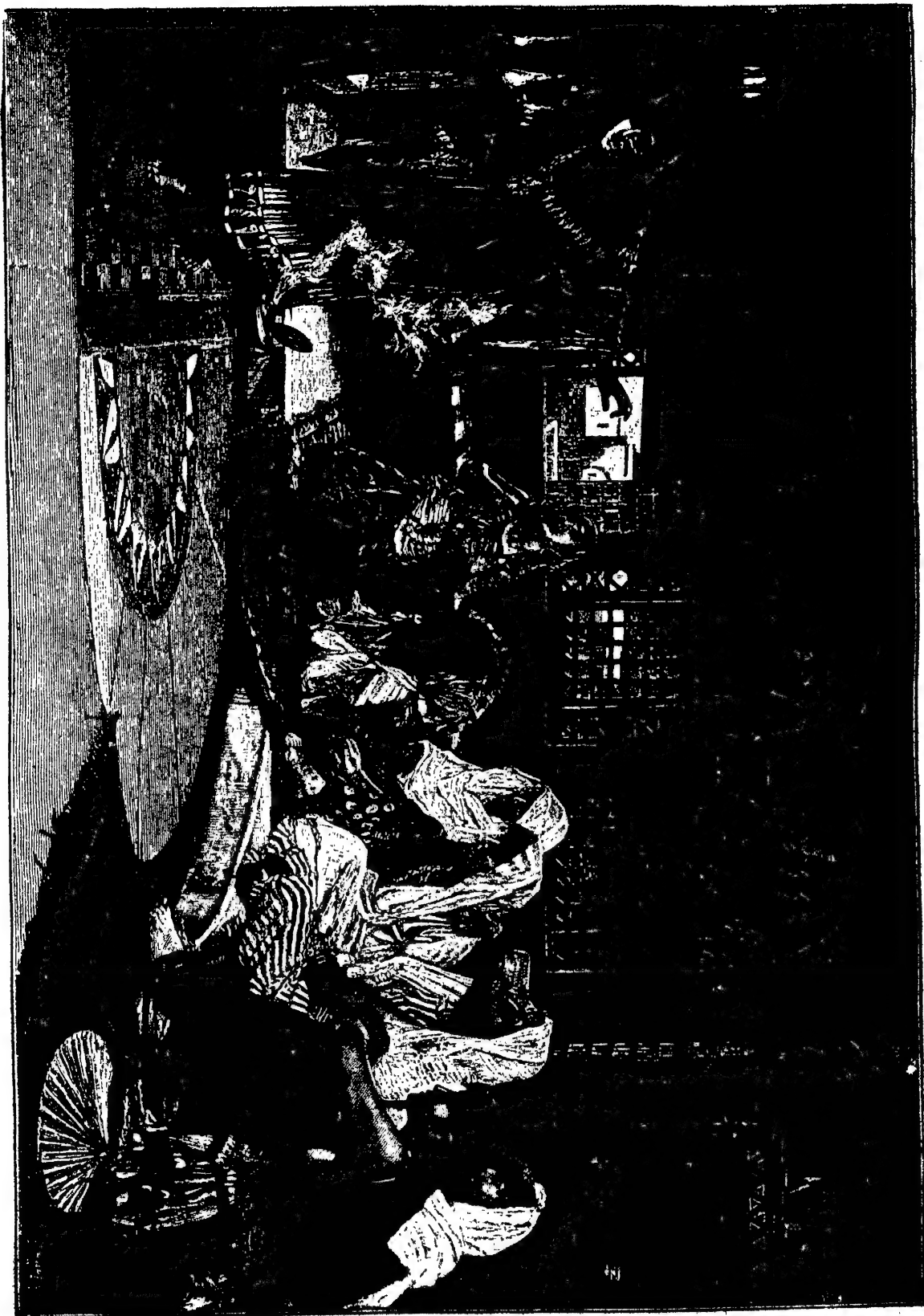
Solomon was greatly assisted in all this labor and expense by his friend Hiram, king of Tyre, who sent him vast quantities of gold and silver and received in return presents of corn, oil and wine, which the Hebrews raised in abundance. But Solomon further enriched his possessions by fitting out ships that went as far as India and brought him precious metals, stones and fabrics.

SOLOMON IS VISITED BY THE QUEEN OF SABÆA.

The wisdom and wealth of Solomon, as well as the renown of his palace and the Temple dedicated to God, made his name familiar to all the rulers of the world. By marriage with a daughter of one of the kings of Egypt, he established commercial relations with the Egyptians, which resulted largely to his advantage. Among those who heard much concerning his fame was a certain queen who ruled over a portion of south Arabia, called Sabæa, near the sea. She is commonly called, as in the Bible, the Queen of Sheba, and is represented as having come from Ethiopia, but those best versed in the history of the Jews declare that she was not an Ethiopian, but that the country over which she ruled was south of Arabia Felix, and was called Sabæa, of which fact there is now no longer any doubt. This woman was of an inquiring mind and much given to philosophy, for which reason she made a journey to visit Solomon, that she might discourse with him on matters concerning which she desired information, as well also to behold with her own eyes the wonders of his palace and of the Temple. Accordingly she loaded many camels with rich presents, and accompanied by a large retinue of servants, came to Jerusalem, where she was graciously received by the king. Upon beholding all the magnificent things which Solomon showed her, she confessed that they exceeded even the flattering descriptions she had heard, but in her interview with the king she was more deeply impressed by his wisdom than by the wondrous things and riches of his surroundings. This friendly visit was terminated, at the end of several days, by an exchange of costly presents, such as gold, silver and precious stones, when she returned to her own country to spread anew the fame of Israel's great king.

SOLOMON ABANDONS GOD AND BOWS DOWN TO IDOLS.

The history of Solomon's reign is very meagre, comparatively few incidents of his administration being recorded in either the Bible or Josephus' writings. We are told that he subjugated all the Canaanites and made them his slaves, but none of the battles he had with these people are described; but he could hardly have accomplished their enslavement without a long and terribly destructive warfare. So are we told, but very briefly, of the manner in which he fortified Jerusalem, and surrounded the city by a great wall, but



SOLOMON'S HAREM.

"And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods."—1 KINGS xi. 8

the principal portion of the Bible referring to Solomon is devoted to descriptions of his wealth and the luxurious extravagances of his court.

With all of Solomon's wisdom, his riches finally destroyed the gift of prudence with which he was endowed, and brought him into excesses that incurred God's displeasure, resulting in a rupture, and a division of the kingdom of Israel. In many respects he was like his father, and these inherited passions at length dominated his better nature, and carried him to his grave in an inglorious manner. His disorder was first manifested by his taking a large number of wives, to which he afterward added hundreds of concubines from idolatrous nations, such as the Sidonians, Tyrians, Ammonites and Edomites, though he was inconsistent enough to order that none of his people should marry except among themselves. These foreign wives and concubines exerted the greatest influence upon him, to the extent of weaning him entirely from God, and causing him to worship their idols. Having started upon the downward road, his descent was rapid, and the unhappy end could now be plainly foreseen.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL IS DIVIDED.

When the king's conduct had become so profligate as to excite the fears of all Israel, God sent a prophet to warn him against his misdoings, and to tell him also that while the kingdom should not be taken from him during his life, it would be rent after his death, and that his son would succeed to the rulership of only one of the twelve tribes. This prophecy greatly grieved Solomon, though he made no effort to amend his ways.

An enemy was soon raised up against the king in the person of Hadad, who had married a sister of Pharaoh, and whose aid and sympathy he received. This man, learning of affairs in Israel, joined what forces he could muster with a robber named Rezon, and together they attacked Syria with such success that Hadad soon made himself master of the country, and was proclaimed king thereof. He next entered Israel and laid waste a great portion of that fair land. About this time, Jeroboam, the son of Nabat, who had been in the king's favor and was in charge of the tribe of Joseph and the walls of Jerusalem, was prompted by the advice of a prophet named Abijah to make a revolt against Solomon. This prophet met him in a quiet place, and taking off his mantle rent it into twelve pieces, and bade Jeroboam take ten of them as a sign that he should become king over ten tribes of Israel.

This revelation of Abijah fired Jeroboam with such ambition that he went immediately to sowing discord among the people, and inciting them to rebel against Solomon, in which, however, he was only partially successful. The king, hearing of Jeroboam's treason, sent men to arrest him, but he fled to Shishak, king of Egypt, under whose protection he remained only a short while before Solomon died. Solomon ruled forty years and was buried with the usual royal ceremonies in Jerusalem, but so unpopular had he become before his death that when his son Rehoboam attempted to ascend the throne

the people rejected him, after exacting a promise of how, in the event of his reign, he proposed to rule the country. The bitterness of the people was so great against him that he fled in his chariot to Jerusalem, where he was proclaimed king by the tribes of Judah and of Benjamin, who had not participated in the revolt. All the other ten tribes now sent for Jeroboam, who, upon his coming to them, was made their ruler, and established his seat of empire at Shechem, where he built a palace. Rehoboam tried to raise an army of 180,000 men to drive out Jeroboam, but the prophet Shemaiah restrained him by advising him of God's displeasure at such an act, which would be causing brothers of the same country to fight against one another.

JEROBOAM SETS UP GOLDEN IMAGES AND IS PUNISHED.

The two kings ruled Israel under constant dread of each other, and though there was no war it was an armed peace. Affairs thus continued for a few months, until the Feast of Tabernacles, when it was customary for all the Hebrews to visit the Temple at Jerusalem to worship and make their sacrifices. Jeroboam very wisely concluded that if those tribes over which he was ruling should go to Jerusalem they would fall into the power of Rehoboam, who might persuade them to abandon him, and to prevent this possible result he invented a contrivance whereby his people might worship without going to Jerusalem. He accordingly had two golden heifers cast, and making a temple for each, set one up in Bethel and the other in Dan. He then made a speech to the people, telling them that God had His abode in every place and it was therefore unnecessary that they should make a long journey to Jerusalem to worship Him. He reminded them that it was only a man who had built the Temple and that he had likewise made two golden heifers and dedicated them to God, together with temples consecrated to God, and had provided priests and Levites to minister to them.

This speech satisfied the ten tribes and they had no desire to go to Jerusalem; but when the day of ceremony arrived Jeroboam built an altar before one of the heifers and undertook to be a high-priest himself. As he was going to offer the sacrifices a prophet named Jadon, who had come from Jerusalem, stood up in the midst of the people and prophesied that a certain man of the name of Josiah, from the family of David, would be sent by God to punish these false priests and the deceivers of the people, and as a sign of the fulfillment of his words he declared that the altar should be immediately broken to pieces and all the fat of the sacrifices upon it be poured upon the fire. At this prophecy Jeroboam stretched out his hand and asked the people to grasp it, but instantly his arm was paralyzed and hung down limp by his side while the altar was scattered and broken as the prophet had foretold. Jeroboam now prayed that his arm might be restored, which the prophet graciously did, but refused to accept his invitation to sup with him, having been ordered by God not to tarry in the city, nor to return by the same way he came.

JADON IS DESTROYED BY A LION.

When Jadon had gone out of Bethel, on his way to Jerusalem, a certain false prophet, who was in the esteem of Jeroboam, though enfeebled by age and infirmity, fearing that the true prophet might supplant him in the king's affection, had his ass quickly saddled and set out to overtake Jadon and bring him back to Bethel, that he might cause him to transgress God's commands. The false prophet overtook Jadon as he was sitting beneath an oak-tree resting. Saluting him graciously he begged to know why Jadon had not stopped to sup with him, seeing that he, too, was a prophet worshipping the same God. Jadon excused himself by saying that God had forbidden him to tarry or sup in any man's house in Bethel. At this the false prophet importuned him the more, and at length induced Jadon to return with him to his home and to stay over night.

While the two were making themselves merry at supper, God appeared to Jadon and told him that he should suffer the iniquity of his disobedience, and foretold also the manner in which it should be. When, therefore, Jadon resumed his journey in the morning he was met in the highway by a lion, which pulled him off the animal he was riding, and after killing him sat beside the body until some travellers came by and discovered what had been done.

The false prophet begged of the sons of Jadon, when they came out to get the remains of their father, to give them sepulture, that when he himself should die, his body might be laid in the grave with so good and divine a man as Jadon had been; but when he saw Jeroboam he persuaded him that Jadon had been an impostor whom God had punished for his wicked pretenses. He thus gained the favor of Jadon's son, and also of the king, who, believing all that had been told him, continued in his wickedness.

A KING OF EGYPT CAPTURES JERUSALEM AND SPOILS THE TEMPLE.

Rehoboam, being left unmolested for a long time, governed with such wisdom as not only made him very popular among his own subjects but also gained him the favor of the Levites and others of Jeroboam's people who esteemed the sacrifices made at Bethel as sacrilegious. As his power increased by these accessions from the ten tribes, Rehoboam extended his kingdom and built many cities which he provisioned with corn, wine and oil, and garrisoned them with troops as a measure of safety.

Soon after reaching the throne Rehoboam married a Jewish woman, by whom he had three children, but, like the other leaders of Israel, he was not content with one wife, and accordingly married seventeen others. His second wife, however, was of his kindred, a double half-cousin, so to speak, for she was the daughter of Absalom by his sister Tamar. By this woman, whose name was Maachah, he had a son whom he called Abijah (*son of Jehovah*), and because of his exceeding love for Maachah, he designated this son as his

successor and gave him charge of all the cities of his kingdom, and of his treasures.

The eighteen wives and thirty concubines which Rehoboam had, bore him twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters, a manifest evidence of the same passion that had characterized Solomon and David, and which led to the same disastrous results. Having given himself to all manner of excesses, he forgot the goodness of God and became so wicked that he contaminated his subjects until Israel had become as perverse and iniquitous as were the Canaanites or Ammonites.

God would not permit such wickedness to go unpunished, but instead of afflicting the people with His own hand He sent Shishak, king of Egypt, to invade the country and lay it waste. This king led an army comprising twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and four hundred thousand foot soldiers, the greater part being composed of Ethiopians and Libyans. This invasion occurred during the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, and considering the size and condition of his family at this time, we obtain an idea how rapid Rehoboam's descent had been from that of a high-born ruler to the slave of the most despicable passions.

Shishak's march through Judah was almost unopposed. He captured city after city, and garrisoning them with his own troops, continued the invasion until he reached the gates of Jerusalem. He laid siege to Israel's capital, and was not long in reducing the inhabitants to such straits for food that they surrendered without resistance. This result was hastened by the prophecy of Shemaiah, who told Rehoboam that God had forsaken him for his iniquity, and had determined to deliver him and his people into the hands of the Egyptians to be slaves.

When Shishak was admitted into Jerusalem he set his soldiers upon the Temple, from which they took all the treasure, not sparing even the bucklers and shields of gold which Solomon had made, nor the golden quiver David had taken from the king of Zobah and dedicated to God. With the enormous riches obtained from the Temple, Shishak was content, for they were very much greater than he had expected to find, and he therefore returned to Egypt without subjecting the Israelites to the bondage which Shemaiah had prophesied.

But Rehoboam, though escaping slavery, had lost all his glory, and never recovered his former power. He retained his crown, however, twelve years after Shishak's invasion, though a portion of his kingdom was taken from him. He died at the age of fifty-seven years, and was buried in the royal sepulchre at Jerusalem, and was succeeded by Abijah, who was now scarcely fifteen years old.

THE DOWNFALL OF JEROBOAM.

While affairs in Judah were so calamitous, the ten tribes under Jeroboam, though escaping Shishak's invasion into Israel, were in little more promising condition. The king continued to disregard the covenants of his father, and

made sacrifices to images at Bethel, which finally brought him to a fate even worse than that to which Rehoboam was reduced.

Jeroboam had a son by a wife whom he had married from among his own people, who was called Abijah, being the same name that Rehoboam had given to the heir to his throne. This son having fallen very ill, Jeroboam sent his wife to Shiloh to inquire of a prophet named Ahijah, whether the child should recover. Before going, however, he charged her to put on a disguise, so that the prophet might not know, when she should come into his presence, that she was the queen. But disguise did not serve to conceal her identity from the holy man, whose eyesight, though dim, discovered to him, through revelation from God, who she was, and also the purpose of her visit. When, therefore, upon the moment she appeared before the prophet, he told her that he knew she was the wife of Jeroboam, come to ask concerning whether her child should live. He therefore prophesied that her son should be dead before she could return to her home, and that Jeroboam himself should be punished by being dethroned, and all his household given to dogs and fowls for food. Moreover, he added, the people themselves should be scattered into places beyond the Euphrates, being first overcome by a king who would be raised to the throne by appointment.

All these things came to pass as the Shiloh prophet had predicted. When his wife returned to Jeroboam she found her child dead, but this verification of the prophecy did not incline the king to mend his ways, for the projects he now conceived only hastened his downfall. Despising the youth and opposition of Abijah, he fitted out an expedition against Judah, consisting of 800,000 men, and marched to Mount Zemaraim, where he was met by an army of about one-half the size of his own at the head of which was the youthful king of Judah. While the two armies were in battle array Abijah stood in an elevated place and begged Jeroboam and his people to hear first what he had to say. He then made a speech before the two armies, in which he reminded the people that God had appointed David and his descendants to rule over Israel, and consequently that Jeroboam was wrongfully in possession of the crown, but that God would not much longer suffer him to thus reign and divide the twelve tribes. He also charged Jeroboam with sacrilege in offering burnt-offerings and worshipping golden heifers, which God would certainly punish. While he was thus talking, Jeroboam secretly sent a portion of his army to surround Abijah's camp, and fell upon him with such suddenness that the young king's army was on the point of a panic. Abijah's bravery and exhortation rallied them, however, and after a great battle he routed Jeroboam's forces, with a loss unparalleled in all history, for there were slain of Jeroboam's army 500,000 men. This victory was followed by the capture of Bethel and other important cities, until Jeroboam was reduced to a position little above that of a vassal.

Abijah did not live long to enjoy the fruits of his victory, or to bestow

upon his people the benefits of that wisdom and courage which he so early manifested. But his history is clouded by the same vices which distinguished his predecessors, for though he reigned only three years, and had therefore not attained his majority at the time of his death, yet he was married to fourteen wives and left behind him twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. He was succeeded by his son Asa, under whom the country had peace for ten years.

Jeroboam survived Abijah only two years, after governing the ten tribes for a period of twenty-two years. His successor was his son Nadab, a foolish and wicked young man, who met his death, two years after he had assumed the throne, at the hand of one of Abijah's sons, Baasha by name. After killing Nadab, Baasha took the crown, and his first act thereafter was to destroy the entire house of Jeroboam. Those whom he killed in the cities were given to dogs to eat, while those slain in the fields were allowed to remain where they had fallen, as food for fowls, thus fulfilling the predictions of the prophet of Shiloh.

ASA'S GREAT VICTORY OVER THE EGYPTIANS.

Asa was a man altogether different in disposition from those who had ruled before him. Instead of giving himself up to the vices which had so often caused the downfall of Israel's kings, he devoted himself to doing that which was good for his people, and observing God's laws. The dangers by which he was surrounded caused him to look to the safety of his kingdom, and he therefore raised an army of defense, consisting of three hundred thousand men of Judah, and two hundred and fifty thousand Benjaminites, who were admirably equipped with spears, shields and bows. Besides organizing so large an army he added new defenses to Jerusalem, and having thus provided so well against foes he ruled in peace and with great wisdom and piety for ten years. At the end of this period, however, Zerah, king of Ethiopia, undertook an expedition against him at the head of nine hundred thousand footmen, one hundred thousand cavalry and three hundred chariots. Asa heard of the invaders before they had reached the boundary of his country, and making preparations hastily, went out to meet them. The two armies came in sight of each other in a valley called Zephathah, which was only a short distance from Jerusalem. When Asa saw the magnitude of Zerah's army he recited a prayer to God that he might be given the victory, to which petition a gracious reply was made.

Strengthened by God's assurance Asa began the battle, and with such valor and impetuosity that the enemy was speedily defeated with the loss of many thousands. As the Ethiopians retreated, Asa pursued them as far as Gerar, taking such a vast quantity of spoils that his soldiers returned to Jerusalem heavily laden with the things they had captured.

BAASHA'S WAR WITH ASA AND ITS TERRIBLE RESULTS.

When Baasha had increased the power of the ten tribes somewhat, and had built himself a strong city at Tirzah, he became so dreadfully impious that God sent the prophet Jehu to warn him of the punishment which awaited his wickedness. But Baasha disregarded all these warnings, and continued to lead a life like that which had distinguished Jeroboam. He also became vain-glorious, and in a spirit of bravado took his army and laid siege to Ramah, which is only five miles from Jerusalem. Having effected its capture, he fortified and garrisoned the place as a menace to Asa, and as a defiance to that power which Asa acknowledged and worshipped.

To circumvent Baasha without going to war with him, as it was not proper that the Hebrews should fight among themselves, Asa sent ambassadors to the king of Damascus—who was an ally of Baasha—with a vast treasure of gold and silver to purchase his friendship, and to induce him to fight Baasha. The king of Damascus was mercenary enough to accept the reward, upon the conditions imposed by Asa, and he took his army and laid siege to several cities which Baasha had left poorly protected, and captured some that were of the greatest importance to the king of Israel. This attack from a new enemy caused Baasha to abandon Ramah and return to Tirzah, where he soon afterward died. His son Elah succeeded him, but after a reign of two years was treacherously assassinated by Zimri, a commander of one-half the king's army. Zimri then seized the throne and put to death every one of Baasha's household, just as Baasha had those of the house of Jeroboam. Zimri, however, was not permitted to rule unmolested. A large portion of the army, while laying siege to Gibbethon, would not acknowledge Zimri, and proclaimed Omri their king. As soon as he had been thus declared, he drew off his army from Gibbethon and went to Tirzah for the purpose of seizing Zimri, who, however, anticipated his coming, and fled into a secret room of his palace. He had hoped that some of his guards would defend him, but, finding that no one espoused his cause, he set fire to the palace and miserably perished in the flames.

Omri was no more righteous than had been Jeroboam, nor more fortunate than Elah or Zimri, for he in turn was assassinated by one of his own household. The crown, however, was permitted to descend to his posterity, he being succeeded by his son Ahab.

Asa continued to rule the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin for a period of forty-one years, during which time his kingdom was greatly strengthened, and his people remained in increasing prosperity. His death was the occasion of intense sorrow throughout all Judah, and he was buried in Jerusalem with all the pomp and funeral rites that were shown by the Israelites at the burial of David. Asa was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat, who was born to him by his wife Azubah. Whether he had any other wives or not the Bible does

not tell us, but we may very justly infer, from the success of his reign and the high favor in which he was held by God, that he was never married to any other woman.

AHAB'S WICKED REIGN.

The kings succeeding to the throne of the ten tribes learned no wisdom from the crimes and punishments of their predecessors, but continued in the same follies. Ahab was more wicked, if possible, than Jeroboam, Zimri or Omri, eschewing all good and following all manner of wickedness. He married shortly after coming to the throne, but instead of taking a Jewish woman, according to the written law of Moses, he wedded a daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Tyrians and Sidonians, who were idolaters. This woman's name was Jezebel, a proud and infamously wicked creature, who brought to her husband for his adoption the practices of her idolatrous people. One of her first acts, after becoming queen, was to build a temple for the god Belus, around which she had a beautiful garden made. She also appointed a large number of priests and false prophets, and otherwise sought to impress the people with the divine nature of this idol. In all these things she was assisted by Ahab, who was pleased at this means for manifesting the wickedness in his heart.

Samaria was Ahab's seat of government, and it was here that the altars for idolatry were erected; but besides these altars he dedicated a grove to the revolting orgies of Ashtarothe, and established a college for his false prophets in the grove where four hundred were kept under instruction, besides four hundred and fifty other prophetic priests who predicted for the king. All of these were fed by Jezebel, who held them in such reverential regard that she ordered her officers to put to death all the true prophets of God. This order was the cause of great sorrow, and in the end the destruction of this dreadful woman.

Obadiah was the governor of Ahab's house, but, though surrounded by the most evil of influences, he still retained a godly spirit and was true to the laws of Moses and of Joshua. When, therefore, Jezebel's order was issued, Obadiah sought out many of the true prophets and apprised them of their danger; he also hid one hundred in a cave and supplied them with food, trusting to the Lord for their and his own protection. This was the darkest hour that had yet fallen on Israel, when we are told that there were not above seven thousand who acknowledged Jehovah, all the others of this mighty nation and ten tribes having given themselves up to the worship of idols and iniquities of every kind.

THE MIRACLES OF ELIJAH.

The day of retribution was now near at hand, for God could no longer suffer Ahab to continue in his corrupting vices. He accordingly sent a great prophet, named Elijah, a Tishbite, to the king to tell him that his iniquities should be punished by a famine that would oppress all the land, for no rain

should fall for three or more years, or until the king became humbled and left off his wicked ways. This prophecy made Ahab very angry, and he would have killed Elijah had the prophet not obeyed God's instructions to flee into the wilderness and there remain hidden by a brook. While Elijah was thus in hiding God sent ravens to feed him, both morning and evening. He

remained beside the brook for several months, and until, by reason of the failure of rain, it dried up, when he was told by the Lord to go to a city named Zarephath, where he would meet a widow woman that would furnish him with food.

As Elijah was approaching the gate of Zarephath he met a woman gathering sticks, and accosting her, begged a cup of water and a piece of bread, to which request she replied that all the food remaining in her house was a handful of meal and a little oil which she was upon the point of preparing for herself and son, believing that she must starve when this was gone.

DEATH OF THE WIDOW'S ONLY CHILD

Elijah thereupon bade her be of good cheer and to bake the meal, of which she should give him a small cake, assuring her that God would not allow her store to decrease during the famine. The woman now did as the prophet had requested, and when she had baked the bread and given a part to Elijah and made another cake for herself, she saw that there still remained as much meal and oil as before, nor was the store in any wise diminished during the remaining years of famine.

When Elijah had remained with the widow for a long while, thus subsisting by God's providence, the woman's son fell ill and soon afterward died. She thereupon fell to lamenting, and giving expression to her fears that the death of her only child was sent as a punishment upon her for harboring a prophet whose life the king had condemned. Elijah now asked her to give the body into his charge, and taking it up to his room in the house he prayed God to restore the child, and to take away the evil from the good woman who had fostered His servant, and in all things had been so upright and charitable. The Lord answered Elijah's prayer by renewing the child's life and giving him back in health to his bereaved mother.



ELIJAH MANIFESTS HIS POWER BEFORE AHAB.

When the famine had lasted three years and the people of all Israel were dying of starvation, God sent Elijah up to Ahab to manifest his power, and wean the people from their idolatry.

While on his way to Samaria the prophet met Obadiah, whom he ordered to go and tell Ahab of his presence; but Obadiah refused at first to carry such a message, because, he declared, that Ahab had searched his kingdom for all true prophets that he might slay them; besides, if he should inform the king of the prophet's presence and the king should not be able to find him, he himself would be put to death as a messenger of false news. After some persuasion, however, Obadiah informed Ahab of Elijah's desire to have an audience with him, and when the prophet came into the king's presence he told him that the Lord would

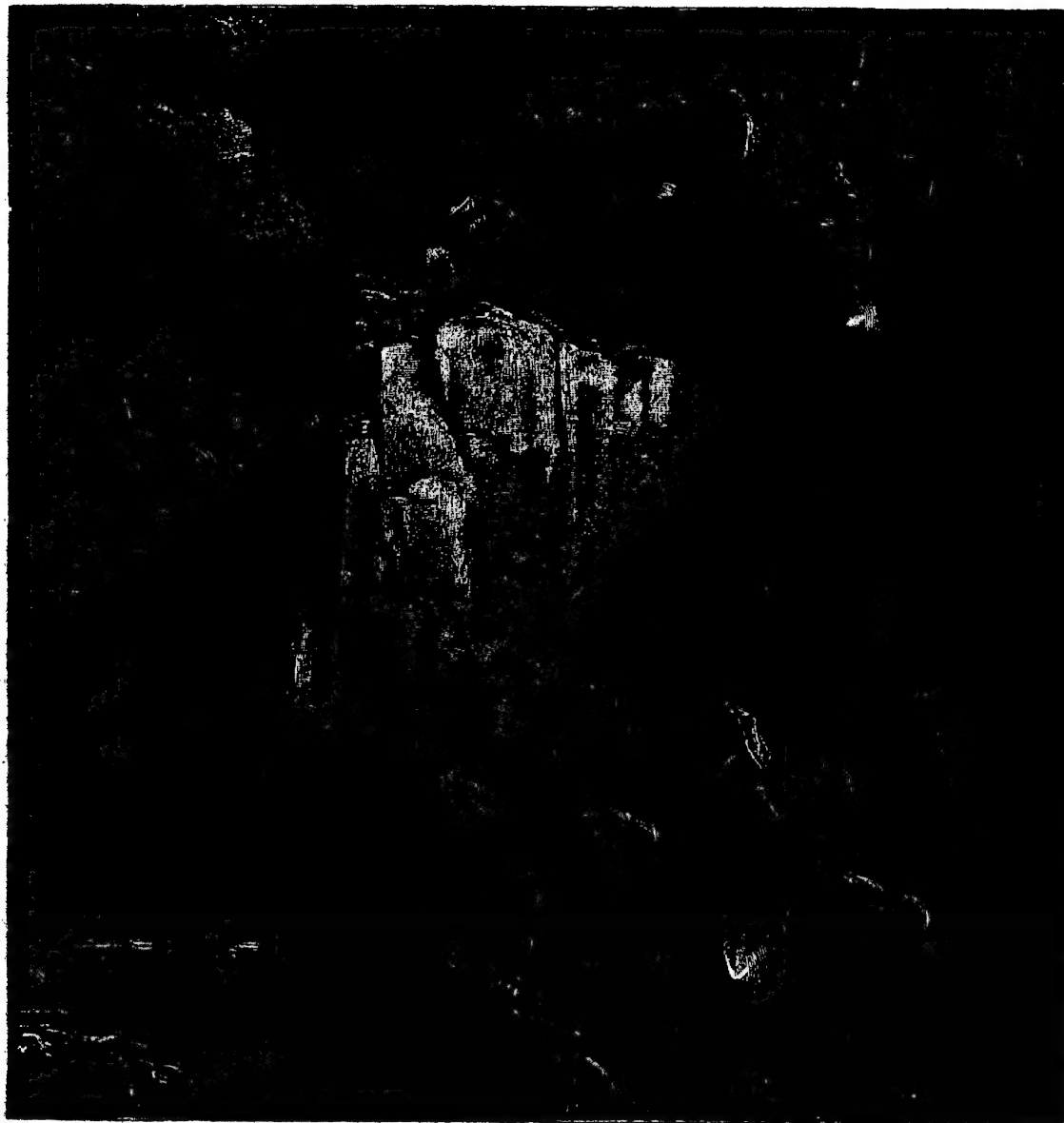


ELIJAH RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON.

"And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord."—1 KINGS xvii. 21.

now show to him the impotence of the idols of Baal and the power of the true God. He asked the king, therefore, to call all his people and his prophets together at Mount Carmel, where God would manifest to him the power he had declared. Ahab did as Elijah had requested, and assembled a vast multitude

of his subjects on the mount, besides the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, who had come to exhibit the wonders which they believed their god to be capable of performing.



EXECUTION OF THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

"And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there."—I KINGS xviii. 40.

When the vast concourse of people were brought together Elijah addressed them and asked how long they would serve false gods, that could do nothing for them, and reject the living God to whom they owed everything. He said, if Jehovah be the true God then they should worship Him alone, but if Baal

be God then it were meet that they should obey him, but that he would this day show to them who was the God of gods. So saying, Elijah ordered that two bullocks be slain, one to be laid upon the altar of Baal, and the other laid upon the altar which he had built to God. When this was done he called upon the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal to pray to their god to send fire to burn up their offering, as a sign of his power and acceptance of the sacrifice. The prophets thereupon fell to praying until the day was well spent, but though they cried in a very loud voice and performed many curious ceremonies, their sacrifice remained unconsumed, and no answer came to them from their idol. Elijah now mocked them with such suggestions as, "Cry louder, perhaps Baal cannot hear, or is asleep, or his spirit may be absent on a journey."

When the prophets of Baal were unable to arouse their god, and were in a shameful condition of mind because of their failure before the people, Elijah asked that a bullock be placed upon the altar of wood which he had erected. He also requested that twelve barrels of water be brought and poured upon the wood until the trench that was dug around it should be filled. When all this was done Elijah bowed himself in prayer to God, whom he petitioned for a manifestation of His holy power, that all the people might know who was the living and true God, that they might destroy their idols and return to the worship of Jehovah, who had brought them out of bondage and established them in the land promised to Moses, Abraham and Jacob. While he was thus praying a fire came out of heaven and descended upon the altar, which it burned up, together with the water that was in the trenches; seeing which wondrous thing the people fell upon their knees crying, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" When he saw all the people bowing in adoration of the true God, he commanded them to seize all the false prophets and bring them to the brook Kishon, where, according to what God had told him to do, he put them all to the sword.

RAIN IS SENT, BUT ELIJAH IS PERSECUTED BY JEZEBEL.

When the sacrifices had been made Elijah told Ahab that rain would soon be sent upon the land again, and the famine would speedily abate; so Ahab retired to the side of Mount Carmel while Elijah went on top and prayed to God that rain might fall and nourish the parched earth, now so long barren. While he prayed he sent his servant to a higher point of the mountain, to inform him if any clouds were visible in the sky. The servant returned telling him that the sky was like brass and no cloud visible. Elijah sent him up again, and six times did the servant return with the same answer, but the seventh time of his going up he told the prophet that he saw a cloud rising out of the sea, but it appeared no larger than a man's hand. Elijah, however, knew by this sign that the rain was near at hand, so he told Ahab to make ready his chariot and return quickly to Samaria, for that a heavy rain would

soon fall over all the land. Ahab started at once for the city, accompanied by Elijah, who ran before the king's chariot to the gate of the city. As they came within the place a terrible wind storm came up which filled the sky with dark clouds that hung like an inky pall over the whole land, and soon the



ELIJAH PERSECUTED BY JEZEBEL.

"I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away."—1 KINGS xix. 10.

Beersheba, which was on the boundary of Judah. He remained here only a short time when he learned that there was no greater safety for him among the people of Beersheba than among those of Jezreel, so he fled to the desert. His

rain began to fall until it swept down in torrents, as if God had resolved again to destroy the earth. But when all the country was refreshed the rain abated, the sun broke forth again and the people rejoiced that they had been thus delivered from a famine that had oppressed them for three and one-half years.

When Jezebel was told of the things which Elijah had done, and how he had caused the death of her prophets, she sent officers of her court in pursuit, with instructions to kill him. But Elijah was forewarned of the conspiracy against his life and fled to



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THE ASCENT OF ELIJAH.

"Behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." 2 Kings ii. 11.

wanderings through the waste lands of Judah were accompanied by so much distress and fear of starvation that he prayed for death, since being pursued on every hand by enemies he could obtain neither rest nor peace. Worried thus and exhausted by hunger, he fell asleep under a large tree whose friendly branches were his only covering; he was awakened after some hours of rest, and found set before him a vessel of water and a bowl of food with which he satisfied his hunger and thirst, and then arose and went to Horeb. Here he found a cave in which he made his abode, because it was a place seldom visited by any one, and therefore offered to him a safe retreat.

One day, while lying within the depths of the cave, he heard a voice asking why he had chosen this solitude for his habitation: to which he replied, not knowing to whom the voice belonged, that it was because his life was sought by the wicked Jezebel. Another voice now told him to come out of the cave on the next day and it would instruct him what to do, for God would take care of His servants. Elijah came out, as he had been bidden, and as he approached the light he saw a brightness like that of a great fire, while the earth shook beneath his feet and a voice was again heard, commanding him to return home, and ordain Jehu to be king over his own people, and Hazael of Damascus to be over the Syrians, to whom should be given an order to slay the impious multitude; but he was also told to appoint Elisha, of the city of Abel, a prophet in his stead, for the Lord was about to do a wonderful thing to him. When Elijah heard these instructions he returned to Gilead, and soon after found Elisha plowing, and other laborers in the field driving twelve yoke of oxen. Immediately he cast his mantle upon Elisha as a token that he had been appointed a prophet of God, and the latter began forthwith to prophesy, and taking leave of his parents became a follower of Elijah.

AHAB HAS NABOTH STONED AND TAKES HIS VINEYARD.

Shortly after Elijah's return to his country Ahab and Jezebel perpetrated a crime which brought upon them the vengeance of God—though not immediately—and a punishment which brought an end to their iniquities.

There was a man named Naboth who had a vineyard that adjoined one of the king's fields, and was very near the royal residence. Ahab was anxious to possess this piece of ground so as to enlarge his gardens, but when he went to purchase it Naboth refused to sell it for any sum of money, or to exchange it for any other parcels which the king offered, valuing the vineyard highly because it was an inheritance from his father. Ahab's disappointment was such that he fell into a melancholy mood, and refused food for some time. Seeing him thus depressed Jezebel asked the cause, and learning that it was because of Naboth's refusal to sell the vineyard, she encouraged him not to be troubled over so small a matter, and that she would yet obtain for him the coveted ground. Accordingly, she sent letters to all the judges among the Jezreelites, in Ahab's name, commanding them to fast and afterward to

assemble in council and bring Naboth before them, upon the charge of having blasphemed God and the king, and to have three witnesses to prove Naboth's transgressions. She also ordered that upon his being found guilty he should be stoned to death, and that his vineyard should be given to the king as a forfeit. By this infamous order Naboth was taken and stoned to death and Ahab fell into possession of the ground; but he was not permitted to enjoy his new property, for God sent Elijah to reproach him for his crime, and to prophesy that in the very place where Naboth's blood had been licked by dogs



NABOTH BEFORE KING AHAB.

both his own blood and that of his wife should be shed, and the body of the latter should be eaten also by dogs.

When Ahab heard this prediction he was exceedingly sorry for what he had done, and putting on sackcloth he refrained from food and prayed earnestly to God for forgiveness. The humility which Ahab exhibited was so great that God sent Elijah to tell him that He would not destroy his family at once, as He had intended, but would not withhold his wrath from Ahab's son.

In all the things which Ahab did he was held less responsible because they were prompted rather by his wicked wife than by his own propensities, for Jezebel was so bold, and of such a strong mind, that she exercised the most potent influence upon Ahab and was, indeed, the supreme ruler.

BENHADAD BESIEGES SAMARIA, BUT IS BEATEN BY AHAB.

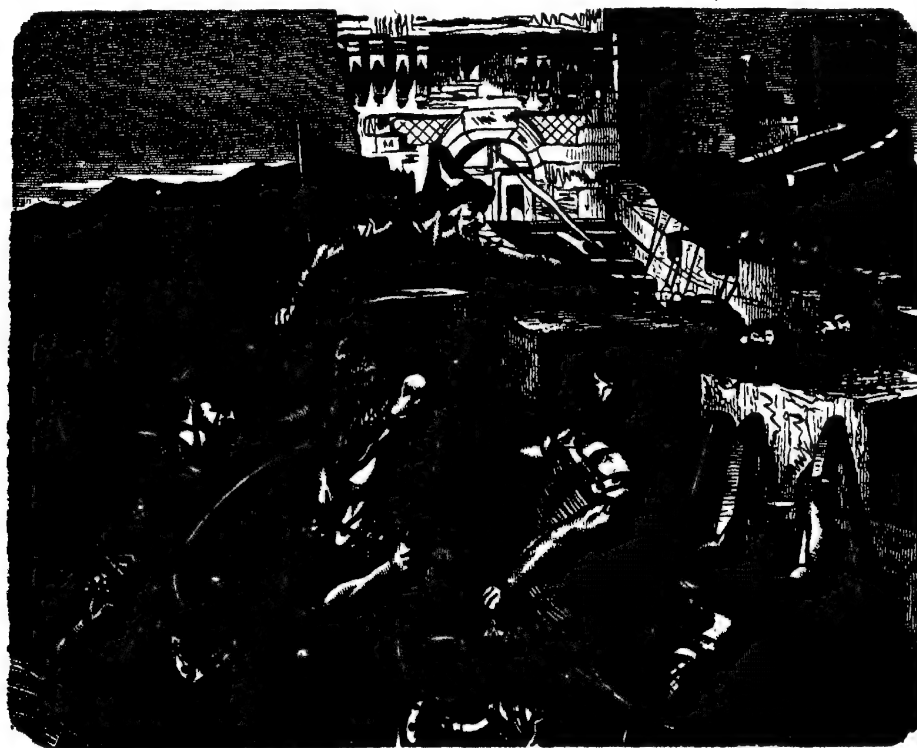
The king of Syria at this time was Benhadad, of Damascus, a proud and insolent person, who was so ambitious to extend his dominion that he engaged thirty-two mercenary kings from beyond the Euphrates and made an expedition against Ahab, with the intention of wresting the kingdom of Israel from him and adding it to his own. He soon invested the city of Samaria, and then sent ambassadors to Ahab to inform him if he would surrender all his riches, together with his wives and children, that the siege would be raised and the city spared. Ahab was in such great fear of Benhadad, on account of the enormous army that he had thrown around Samaria, that he returned a most abject answer, saying all that he possessed would be freely given if Benhadad would but spare the place. This servility of Ahab inspired Benhadad to enlarge his requests; so he dispatched his ambassadors a second time, to tell Ahab to deliver to the servants, whom he would send, all the valuable things that were in the city, and that he should permit them to search the palace and all the houses of his friends and kindred and to take what they pleased.

Ahab now assembled his people together and told them that he was willing to surrender to Benhadad all his own possessions and also his wives and children, for the safety of the city, but that the Syrian king had now demanded that he be permitted to search all the houses for treasure and to take everything which might please him, so he asked the people for their advice as to what he should do. With one accord they recommended resistance, and advised him to return an answer that his demands were rejected, which Ahab accordingly did.

When Benhadad received the king's answer he sent his ambassadors a third time with such terrible threats that he supposed Ahab would be more humble than before; but in this he was disappointed, and the siege was renewed with greater energy and in many different ways, until Ahab was upon the point of despairing. But when his fears were greatest a prophet came to him and declared that if he would but give the leadership to the sons of the princes in Samaria he should gain a victory over the enemy. This advice encouraged Ahab, so that he sent for the men designated, who numbered two hundred and thirty-two persons, to go to the Syrians when they were found feasting, trusting to God for the success of their undertaking, not knowing himself how they were going to make the attack. The princes' sons went out of the gates of Samaria at night and came upon the Syrians while they were too drunk to offer resistance, and falling on them suddenly killed a great number and put the others to flight. Seeing the enemy in retreat Ahab now followed after them with his soldiers and continued the slaughter for a long while, capturing everything in the Syrian camp and taking the king's chariots and a vast amount of gold and silver, with which he returned to the city.

In the following spring Benhadad raised another army and went again

against Ahab, but with no better success than before. The two armies met in a great plain near the city of Aphek, where they remained inactive, watching each other for seven days. At the end of seven days Ahab began the battle, and after some sharp fighting routed Benhadad and slew one hundred thousand of his men. The others fled to Aphek for protection but the walls of this city fell upon them, killing twenty-seven thousand more. Benhadad himself, however, succeeded in escaping by taking refuge in a cave, where he remained for several days, and until hunger drove him forth. Learning that Ahab was a merciful and humane man, and finding his retreat cut off from all sides,



SYRIANS SCALING THE WALLS OF SAMARIA.

Benhadad at length clothed himself in sackcloth and putting a rope about his neck as a sign of his helplessness, he went to the king of Israel and made a supplication for mercy. Ahab received him graciously, and not only promised to spare his life but bade him to come up to his chariot and kissed him

affectionately; nor did he cease with these kindnesses but promised to restore to him his cities and his rule over Damascus.

A certain prophet, named Micaiah, learning of Ahab's generous action, made use of an artifice to come before the king; and when he had gained his presence delivered himself of a prophecy to the effect that God, being displeased with Ahab for having so mercifully pardoned and covenanted with the blasphemer Benhadad, would requite his act by delivering him into the hands of other enemies, by whom he should be killed. Ahab was much distressed at this prophecy, though he ordered that the prophet be cast into prison and there kept until he should see proper to liberate him.

JEHOSHAPHAT AND THE PROGRESS OF HIS KINGDOM.

Jehoshaphat, the king of Jerusalem, was a wise and righteous ruler, unlike his predecessors in all things, and his kingdom grew amazingly in consequence. One of his first acts was to put his country in a state of perfect defense, which he accomplished by raising a very great army, consisting of three hundred thousand men of the tribe of Judah, who were provided with armor, and over whom Adnah was appointed chief; he had, besides, two hundred thousand archers commanded by Jehu, and one hundred and eighty thousand foot soldiers, well armed, and commanded by Jehozabad. This great army was kept constantly ready for the king's service. But these did not comprise all his fighting force, for he built walls about all his cities and garrisoned them with large bodies of men, so that he must have had, altogether, one million well drilled soldiers. His power, as well as his wisdom, gained for him the favor of all neighboring kings, who made him such liberal gifts, in addition to his own possessions, that he became one of the richest and most exalted rulers that ever governed any part of Israel.

In the third year of his reign Jehoshaphat called together the rulers of the country and commanded them to teach all the people in the several cities over which they ruled the laws of Moses, and to incite them to diligence in the worship of God. This produced a most favorable effect, for it served to cement the Hebrews in a common fellowship which largely increased their power, for there were now no factions or disturbing elements in the kingdom.

When Jehoshaphat had reigned several years he chose for his son Jehoram a wife from one of Ahab's daughters named Athaliah, by which he hoped to promote a friendship with Ahab as king of the ten tribes, and it is possible that he also looked forward to the reunion of all the twelve tribes into one nation and under one king.

Some time after Jehoram's marriage Jehoshaphat paid a friendly visit to Ahab, at Samaria, who received him with many evidences of affection and caused great feasts to be held in his honor. During this visit Ahab besought the assistance of Jehoshaphat in a war against the king of Syria, which Ahab was at the time contemplating, in order to recover the city of Ramoth, in Gilead, which was held by the Syrian king. It is probable, also, that Ahab, being troubled by Micaiah's prophecy, had made this a pretense to renew the war with Benhadad and execute upon him the punishment which he now believed he merited as a blasphemer, though three years had elapsed since he gave his pardon to the Syrian king.

To his request Jehoshaphat returned his promises of aid, but only upon an understanding that, while fighting a common enemy, the armies of Ahab and Jehoshaphat should remain distinct and commanded by their own kings.

When Ahab had made everything ready for beginning the war, he called together his four hundred prophets and asked of them if he should gain a

victory over Benhadad; they, being anxious to please the king, answered him favorably, but Jehoshaphat, understanding by their speech that they were false prophets, asked Ahab if there were not in his kingdom some true prophet belonging to God who might give him surer information of how the battle would result. Ahab answered that there was one, indeed, but that he was a man to be despised because he always prophesied evil, who had always foretold that he should be overcome by the king of Syria, for which reason he had cast the prophet into prison. This admission of Ahab's only caused Jehoshaphat to be more greatly concerned, and he ordered that Micaiah be



ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS.

"And the ravens brought him bread and flesh."—1 KINGS xvii. 6.

sent for. When the true prophet appeared before the two kings and was commanded to speak, he was at first loth to do so, but being pressed to tell what should come to pass, he told Ahab that his troops would be dispersed, though they should return in safety, but that he would be overcome and slain.

Ahab was much impressed by the prediction of Micaiah, and would no doubt have abstained from war had not Zedekiah, one of the false prophets, reassured him by charging him to give no heed to the words of Micaiah, who was not to be believed, for he always spoke falsely.

Moreover, to better convince the king Zedekiah struck Micaiah violently, at the same time saying: "If this be a true prophet let him hurt my hand as Jadon caused the hand of Jeroboam to wither." When Ahab saw with what impunity the false prophet treated Micaiah he no longer hesitated, but led his army forth. However, with still some forebodings that evil might come upon him as predicted, Ahab put off his royal robes and clothed himself in the garments of a common soldier, wearing armor, and bade Jehoshaphat to wear his habit and stand before the army, that he might appear as king of the ten tribes. Jehoshaphat cheerfully complied with Ahab's request, for, besides being a brave man, his courage was doubly fortified by reason of the assurances of God.

When Ahab and Jehoshaphat drew up their armies before Ramoth, Benhadad sallied out and met them, but first gave instructions to his soldiers to slay no one but the king of Israel. The Syrians therefore fell upon Jehoshaphat, whom they at first judged to be Ahab because of the clothes he wore, but perceiving their mistake they fell back. The fighting continued all the day, but without any casualties, for the Syrians contented themselves with holding the Israelites in check, giving no blows, but striving all the while to find Ahab. Late in the evening a young nobleman belonging to Benhadad's army, and whose name was Naaman, becoming irritated with impatience because his commander forbore charging the enemy, drew his bow and let fly an arrow, little regarding its flight, and without any idea of the fatal messenger it would prove to be. God evidently directed the arrow, for it struck Ahab between the plates of his armor and penetrated his lungs. The wounded king, anxious for the honor of his army, bade his chariot driver to take him quickly off the field, and not to let the disaster that had befallen him become known to any one, for fear that it would cause his army to retreat. Ahab endured great pain until sunset, when death came to his relief. At the same time the Syrians withdrew, for they did not want to engage in a pitched battle, being doubtful of their power to defeat the Israelites, but when the news of Ahab's death was received they immediately retired within the walls of Ramoth.

The Israelites took Ahab's body back to Samaria, and buried it there with honors appropriate to the exalted position he had held. The chariot in which he had been conveyed was covered with blood, which was eagerly licked up by dogs, as it was being washed at the fountain of Jezreel, thus fulfilling Elijah's prophecy, and also that of Micaiah, who foretold that the king should die at Ramoth.

GOD PERFORMS A MIRACLE IN BEHALF OF JEHOSEPHATH.

As Jehoshaphat was returning to Jerusalem, from his expedition against Benhadad, he was met by the prophet Jehu, who rebuked him soundly for aiding so wicked a man as Ahab, but said God had delivered him from the enemy because of his generally righteous conduct. Jehoshaphat was convinced of the truth of Jehu's words, and betook himself to thanksgiving and the offering of sacrifices as an atonement; he also exhorted his people to observe strictly all the laws of Moses, and appointed judges and priests from among the Levites, who were instructed to teach the Israelites to obey God, and to award sentences according to the most exact justice. These wise acts greatly pleased the people, for they perceived in them the goodness of Jehoshaphat, and that God was with him.

Scarcely had the king regulated his affairs, which had become somewhat disordered during his absence from Jerusalem, when a large army, composed of Moabites, Ammonites and Arabians, made an invasion into Judah, and encamped at Engedi, nearly forty miles from Jerusalem, having come to gather,

by force if necessary, a precious balsam called Balm of Gilead, which was brought out of Arabia by the Queen of Sheba as a present to Solomon, and which, being planted, had flourished greatly in the region of Engedi.

When Jehoshaphat heard of the invaders he called his people to a congregation in the Temple, and there prayed to God for the power to overcome his enemies, to which prayer all the people added their entreaties. While they were thus crying, a prophet named Jahaziel came into the midst of the assembly and assured Jehoshaphat that God heard his supplications and had promised to fight his battle for him. The prophet further instructed the king to take his forces on the following day and go toward Engedi, for he should find the enemy at a place called The Eminence, which was between Jerusalem and Engedi, but having brought his army thither, he should stand still and wait to see what God would do.

Jehoshaphat observed all that Jahaziel had told him, and as soon as daylight appeared he marched out of Jerusalem headed by the Levites, who went before singing hymns and playing upon musical instruments. When they came in sight of the invaders, Jehoshaphat commanded them to halt and observe what should come to pass, for he believed, as the prophet had told him, that some miracle was about to be performed. Nor was he disappointed, for God created a confusion among the Ammonites and Moabites, which caused them to fall upon each other in a desperate conflict that did not terminate until the whole had been slain, and the valley was filled with dead men. For this happy deliverance Jehoshaphat gave thanks to God, and then sent his soldiers to take all that was left in the enemy's camp and the spoils that they might find upon the dead bodies. The search for valuables continued for three days, so great was the number slain, and the spoils recovered were enough to load all those of his army. The valley where God had thus fought the Moabites and Ammonites was therefore called The Valley of Blessings.

When Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem he offered up sacrifices and kept a festival of thanks for many days, nor did he afterward forget God, but remained a righteous man to his death. His glory greatly increased, for he was feared by all neighboring kings; and establishing a league of friendship with Ahaziah, Ahab's son and successor, the two built a considerable fleet of ships which they sent to ports on the Mediterranean and Red Seas for various articles, hoping to establish a commerce with other countries. This effort largely increased his power among his own and neighboring people, but the undertaking was not successful in immediate results, for most of the ships were destroyed because they had not been properly constructed.

Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he ascended the throne, and his rule continued for twenty-five years, when he died, leaving his subjects at peace with all the world and more prosperous and contented than they had ever been under any previous ruler. His place of sepulture was among the kings who preceded him, in the royal tomb at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XXI.

AHAZIAH'S SHORT REIGN AND DEATH.

2 Kings.



HAZIAH, though having Jehoshaphat as an example and ally, had inherited all the weaknesses of his father, Ahab, and the iniquities of his mother, Jezebel. Scarcely had he gained the throne before the worship of Baal was instituted anew, presumably through the influence of Jezebel, though it is hardly probable that idolatry had ceased before Ahab's death. It had certainly greatly diminished, however, and was not publicly observed, until re-established by the sanction, if not open avowal, of Ahaziah. His wickedness provoked the just anger of God, who speedily sent afflictions upon him. His troubles began by the refusal of the Moabites to continue the payment of the tribute that had been levied upon them by Ahab, and when he attempted to force the collection they rebelled and brought a war upon the country. Ahaziah, however, was prevented by an accident from leading his army against the rebels, for at the beginning of hostilities, while he was descending a stairway in his house, he stumbled and fell, and received mortal injuries. While lying in bed from his hurt, he sent messengers to the god of Flies, the divinity which he worshipped and which was set up in Ekron, to inquire if he should recover. The Bible calls this god Baal-zebub, but Josephus says it was the god fly, which Ahaziah worshipped under the belief that it had the power to drive away the flies which were so troublesome at the sacrifices.

God sent Elijah to meet the messengers, and to tell them that the people of Israel had a God of their own, therefore they sinned in going to a foreign god with their inquiries; but that they might return home at once, for Ahaziah should not escape the judgment which had been brought upon him. The messengers came back to Samaria at once, and when they gained the king's presence he asked how they had returned so quickly; in response to which they told him of having met an old man who forbade them to go any further, but to return with the word that their king should not recover. This prediction worried Ahaziah, and the more because he knew by the description given of the prophet by the messengers that it was Elijah.

THE MESSENGERS DESTROYED BY FIRE.

When the king had heard all that had been reported him, though his concern was great, he thought to punish the prophet for making such a pre-

diction, as though such a course might avert his fate. He accordingly sent a captain with fifty men to arrest Elijah and bring him to the city. The captain went out with his company and found Elijah sitting on top of a hill girt about with a girdle of leather. He accosted the prophet harshly and commanded him to come at once to the king, threatening him with force if he should refuse. Elijah thereupon not only refused, but told the captain that he would show him, by a miracle, whether or not he was a true prophet. So saying Elijah prayed that a fire might come out of heaven and destroy the captain and his men. His prayer was speedily answered, for a whirlwind of flame descended from out the clouds and consumed the men. The disaster which had befallen the messengers was told to Ahaziah, who, with increased anger, sent fifty others to accomplish the prophet's arrest, but these, too, were destroyed in the same manner. These calamities, which would have readily convinced a reasonable man, had no other effect upon Ahaziah than to increase his wrath and determination, so he dispatched a third company of fifty men. The captain of this last body was more discreet than those who had gone before, for when he found Elijah, instead of speaking in a peremptory and threatening manner, he accosted him civilly and told the prophet that he had not come of his own accord, but because he had been commanded by the king, and desired that he would have mercy upon himself and men and come willingly to Ahaziah. To this civil and courteous request Elijah returned a kind answer, and went with the captain to the king; but when he had come into the royal presence he repeated the prophecy, that, because Ahaziah had rejected the true God and had given himself over to the worship of idols, he should not recover from his injuries, but would speedily die. This prophecy was fulfilled almost at the instant that Elijah had left off speaking.

Ahaziah's reign lasted only two years when, having died without issue, his brother Jehoram succeed to the throne.

ELIJAH IS TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN.

The last act of Elijah was to prophesy against Jehoram, who, for following in the footsteps of Ahab and Ahaziah, the prophet told should be brought to destruction. His mission on earth was now accomplished, and he received from God the intelligence that he would soon be called to that glorified condition which surpasses all earthly exaltation; nor was the grave to triumph over him at last, for it was ordained that he should pass into heaven without entering through the doors of a sepulchre. Elijah was much given to contemplation, and desired to be alone that he might hold communion with Jehovah, who was always with him. Elisha, however, had been his companion and servant since the Divine power had descended upon him in the field that he was plowing; but now that he was about to be called hence, Elijah desired to be alone again, so he told Elisha to remain at Gilgal, as he wished to go up to Bethel. But Elisha was also forewarned of Elijah's end, and refused to

remain behind, but followed him to Bethel. At this place the two were met by several other prophets, who said to Elisha, "Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy head to-day?" to which he replied, "I do know it; hold your peace." Elijah now told Elisha that he was going up to Jericho, and again asked his servant to remain behind; but, as before, Elisha persisted in following, and when they came to Jericho the same inquiry was addressed to Elisha by the prophets there that was made at Bethel. Upon tarrying here a short time Elijah went on to the Jordan, with Elisha following as before; but the two were now watched by fifty other prophets who had been apprised by Divine intuition of Elijah's end. As the two arrived at the

river's brink Elijah took off his leather girdle, and striking the water, the stream divided so that a wall stood on either side, thus permitting them to walk across in the dry bed. When they had gone over Elijah asked his servant what gift he desired should be bestowed upon him, as the time was now near when they should be separated in this life. Elisha eagerly begged that a double portion of his master's right-



ELIJAH CARRIED HEAVENWARD IN A CHARIOT OF FLAME.

eousness and power might be granted him. To this Elijah replied that while his request was a bold one, yet it should be granted if he were permitted by God to see him taken away; otherwise not. While they were thus conversing a fiery chariot, drawn by horses of flame, came down from the sky and took the good prophet Elijah up to heaven before the eyes of Elisha, but as he went up Elijah cast off his mantle, which falling to the ground, was picked up by Elisha, for it was a sign that his power and spirit had been given to his servant. Elisha now went back to the Jordan, and striking the water with the mantle was rejoiced to see that the gift he had asked for had been bestowed. The river parted again and permitted him to recross on dry

land. When Elisha told the fifty prophets of what had befallen his master they doubted his word and sent in search of him fifty of the most active men in Jericho; but after prosecuting the search for three days they returned and reported their inability to discover any trace of Elijah, whereupon Elisha was accepted as his legitimate successor. But to further prove to his brethren the Divine power which had been given him, he cast some salt into a bitter spring that threw out its acrid water from the base of a hill near Jericho, and instantly the spring became pure and wholesome, and so remains to this day, refreshing a considerable territory that was before barren.

Elisha went from Jericho to Bethel by the same route over which he had followed Elijah, but upon returning to the town some children, as the Bible tells us, came out and mocked him by such expressions as, "Go up, thou bald-head." This so angered the prophet that he prayed God to avenge his insults, whereupon two she-bears issued out of a neighboring wood and tore forty-two of the children. That the rendering into our language of the description of this incident is too literal, is so apparent as to scarcely need mention. The monstrosity of such an act as that of sending bears to destroy lisping little children for so small an offense as this harmless raillery can scarcely be measured by the judgment of men, and to impute it to the Holy Spirit is an iniquity that is unpardonable. It was at Bethel that Jeroboam set up golden heifers for the people to worship, and this idolatry was perpetuated through the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah. It is therefore most probable that when Elisha came by way of the golden images he rebuked the people for their sinfulness, and was answered by *the children of Belial* with mockings, as it was their practice to do, as we have already seen. These children of Belial were the recreant Israelites who had abandoned the true God and joined themselves to idols, and their punishment, by being torn by bears, was a natural visitation of the Divine wrath. Any other interpretation is an injustice both to God and to Elisha.

JEHORAM JOINS JEHOSEPHAT AGAINST THE MOABITES.

Upon the death of Ahaziah, Jehoram, his brother, assumed the rulership, and immediately turned his attention to the Moabites, to compel them to continue paying the annual tribute of one hundred thousand lambs and as many rams; but he did not have the courage to attack the rebels with his own army, and so applied to Jehoshaphat for help. This pious ruler readily proffered his assistance, and as the two marched toward Moab they were joined by the king of Edom, who ruled over a dependency of Judah. The three kings, at the head of their respective armies, marched for seven days in the direction of Moab, but their progress was very slow, and on account of a scarcity of water in the wilderness through which they passed their sufferings were great. The complaints and misgivings of the armies induced Jehoshaphat to inquire if there was a prophet of God among them, and learning that Elisha had accompanied the expedition, besought him to foretell what should befall them.

Jehoram had persisted in the idolatry of his predecessors, and on account of his wickedness Elisha refused to prophesy until the king had promised to yield himself to God; whereupon the prophet commanded the armies to set about immediately to digging trenches over all the plain, assuring Jehoshaphat that a rain should soon come to fill these ditches, and that a great victory would be won over Mesha, king of the Moabites. The army set resolutely to work in the night digging trenches, as Elisha had commanded, and when morning broke they were filled with water by a rain that had fallen just before dawn. The Israelites had retired to their camp, when the Moabites appeared, and, seeing the ditches of water red with the sun's reflected rays, at once concluded that it was blood that had been spilled by the confederated armies fighting among themselves. Without considering further, the Moabites rushed in disorder to the camp which lay before them, in their desire to take such spoils as might be found, but they were taken completely by surprise, for the three armies now left their tents and met the Moabites with such suddenness that they were scattered like so many sheep, and retreated without a show of resistance. The Moabites were pursued and slaughtered with impunity, their cities were burned, fields destroyed, and the whole country devastated until their last place of refuge was in Kir-haraseth, the last city left to them. This place was besieged, and



THE POOL OF ELISHA.

would no doubt have been taken also but for the action of Mesha, who, mounting the walls, raised his son and heir in his arms, and in the face of the besiegers offered him as a sacrifice to the god Moloch for the safety of the city. A singular thing followed. Instead of this sacrilege further offending the pious Jehoshaphat, or raising the wrath of Elisha, who was presumably still with the army, its effect was immediately what the idolatrous Moab king predicted, for the siege was at once raised and the confederated armies returned to their respective countries.

THE MIRACLES WROUGHT BY ELISHA.

The record of Jehoram's reign is chiefly made up with the deeds of Elisha, whose power to work miracles was greater than that of any other prophet, and second only to that of Christ himself.

Soon after his return from the war against Mesha he was met by a poor

woman, who begged him to pity her distress. He asked the cause of her present trouble, to which she replied that her husband had contracted a debt and soon afterward died without being able to pay it; that she had tried in vain to discharge the obligation herself, and now the creditor was threatening to take away her two sons and make bondsmen of them, thus leaving her wholly without means of support. Elisha saw how great was the poor woman's sorrow, and feeling compassion for her, seeing that she possessed only a small pot of oil, bade her go to the neighbors and borrow from them all their empty vessels, and to have her sons bring them into the house and shut the door. When this had been done, he instructed her to pour into each vessel a little of the oil which she had left, and to then watch the result. In a little while, and as she looked at them, all the vessels had become filled with pure oil, which Elisha now ordered her to sell and pay the man whom her husband had owed, and to buy food for herself and children.

A while after performing this miracle Elisha was sojourning in the city of Shunem, and one day while in the street, a certain rich woman meeting him, and knowing that he was a prophet, invited him to stop with her and partake of her hospitality, which invitation he gladly accepted, for the lot of a prophet was a hard one, their dependence being generally upon the bounty of those with whom they chanced to come in contact. The woman was so pleased with Elisha that, after learning that he frequently passed that way, she proposed to her husband that they prepare a special chamber in their house for this man of God, to which he assented, and a room was fitted up with a bed, stool and candlestick, so that the prophet had a comfortable lodging.

Some time after Elisha came by Shunem, accompanied by his servant Gehazi, and put up with the good woman, whose hospitality continued to grow warmer. As a reward for this kindness Elisha told the woman, who had remained childless, that she should have a son, which greatly pleased her, for barrenness was a reproach among the Hebrews.

According to Elisha's prophecy a son was born to the woman, in whom she had great joy, for her life was wrapped up in him. But when the son was almost grown he fell suddenly ill one day while in the field among his father's reapers. He was carried to his mother and sat in her lap until noon, when he died. The anguished woman took the body and laid it upon Elisha's bed, and shutting the door, ran off to find him, her heart being filled with the hope that he might restore her lost one again. Elisha, while sitting on Mount Carmel, saw the woman approaching on an ass, and sent Gehazi to meet her and inquire the cause of her coming. She refused to talk with the servant, however, but came directly into Elisha's presence and told him of the sorrow that had befallen her. Upon learning these evil tidings, Elisha bade Gehazi take his staff and run quickly to the woman's house and lay it upon the child. But the woman would not turn back without Elisha himself should come, so the two went on together. As they neared the house Gehazi came

out and told Elisha that he had laid his staff upon the child, as directed, but that he had not awakened. Thereupon Elisha went into the house and lay himself upon the body, which forthwith grew warm, and the youth soon rose up in life and was given in health to his mother, whose thankfulness was expressed by bowing herself to the earth and kissing his feet.

After this miracle Elisha went to Gilgal to visit some of the prophets and their families that lived there. Becoming hungry he ordered his servant to put a great pot on the fire and go into the field and gather some lentils or peas, and boil them for the company to eat. The servant gathered the peas, as directed, and he also brought some poisonous berries which he took to be good. When the peas and berries were sufficiently boiled the company sat down to eat, but soon discovered the deadly danger that was in the pottage set before them. Elisha now commanded that a little meal be brought, which he threw into the pot and then bade all before him to eat without fear, for the poison had been removed. The men ate accordingly without receiving any harm.

After performing this miracle Elisha went to a gathering of the prophets at another place, and the time being come to eat it was discovered that all the food available was twenty loaves of bread and a few ears of corn. With the assurance born of his divine character, however, he ordered these to be distributed, and when the loaves were broken there was enough food at hand to feed more than one hundred persons.

Elisha's next wondrous work was the healing of Naaman of leprosy. This man was a captain in Benhadad's Syrian host, and because of his great valor, and victories won over the Israelites, was most highly esteemed by the king. In one of the battles which he had fought against Israel he captured a little Hebrew girl that he employed as a waiting-maid to his wife. One day this little girl told her mistress that if Naaman would go to the prophet Elisha he would be healed of his affliction. Thus encouraged, Naaman came to Jehoram with a letter from Benhadad, requesting him to cure the captain of his disease, but Jehoram did not understand the message, believing that it was an excuse to make war against him. Elisha, however, soon heard of the message and sent for Naaman to come to him; and when the captain arrived before the prophet's house Elisha sent his servant out to tell the leper to bathe seven times in the Jordan. This greatly offended Naaman, for he expected Elisha to come out himself and do a miracle by his own hands, and he was, therefore, on the point of returning again to his own country. But some of those who were his attendants persuaded him to do as Elisha had bidden, and when he had dipped the seven times, immediately his flesh became clean and pure.

When he beheld himself restored Naaman returned to Elisha's house, and calling the prophet out, praised him and said, "Behold, now I know that there is no other God in all the earth but the God of Israel." Then he begged Elisha to accept a present, but the prophet refused, desiring no recompense for

the work accomplished through the Lord's will. Then Naaman asked that he might be permitted to take as much dirt from the land as two mules could carry, for he wished to build an altar of the sacred earth upon which to make his offerings thereafter to the true God.

After Naaman had gone away Gehazi, who was a selfish man, thinking to take advantage of the captain's offer of a present, ran after him, and when he had come near he called to Naaman, saying that since he departed two sons of prophets had come to Elisha destitute, and his master had therefore sent him to ask if he would not give them each a talent of silver and two changes of raiment. Naaman was too thankful to refuse so modest a request from the



THE JORDAN (TRADITIONAL BATHING PLACE OF NAAMAN).

prophet, and at once ordered two talents of silver to be placed in two bags, and two changes of raiment brought forth, which he gave to two of his servants to carry back for Gehazi. When they arrived at Elisha's house Gehazi took the silver and clothes and hid them, thinking to appropriate them to his own use when a suitable time should come. The Lord, however, acquainted Elisha with what his servant had done, and when Gehazi came into his presence the prophet inquired of him where he had been. Hoping to deceive him, Gehazi answered that he had been nowhere. Then Elisha covered him with shame and confusion by saying, "Went not mine heart with thee, when the man (Naaman) turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it time to receive money and garments? . . . The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave

unto thee and unto thy seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."

AN ARMY IS SENT TO APPREHEND ELISHA.

Elisha had founded a school for prophets at the place where the curse on Gehazi was given, and the attendance became such that more room was required, or else a more retired spot became necessary, for we are told that these pupils, called "sons of prophets," came to him to say that the place in which they were dwelling was too small for them, and desired of him permission to make a new dwelling house on the banks of the Jordan. This request was granted and the school was removed to a chosen spot on the river's bank. Here the sons of prophets fell to work cutting down trees, but while thus engaged one of the workers chanced to let his axe fall from his hand into a deep place in the river. He was inconsolable at the loss, because axes were precious tools in those days; besides, the one thus lost had been borrowed. When Elisha learned of the accident he went to the man, and inquiring the spot where the axe had fallen, he cut a stick and threw it into the water, whereupon the axe rose and swam upon the surface until it was taken in the man's hand, and recovered.

Some time after this event Benhadad declared war against Jehoram and sent a large army of Syrians to take him captive, but Elisha forewarned the king of Benhadad's designs, so that he was able to evade arrest. This failure to capture Jehoram greatly angered Benhadad, who believed that some of his own servants had discovered his secrets to Israel's king, therefore, sending for several of his trusted men, he asked who of them had given Jehoram knowledge of his purposes. To this one of the men made reply that it was not they who had done this, but Elisha, the prophet. At this Benhadad sent to find where Elisha was dwelling, and by this means learning that he was in Dothan, went up with all his army in the night and laid a watch upon the city, first surrounding it so that no man could escape. At this his servant was greatly alarmed, and asked Elisha what they should do to be delivered from the Syrians. He counselled him to be of good courage, saying, "Those that be with us are more than they that be with them," and then fell upon his knees and prayed that God might show to his servant the mighty host which guarded him. Then the young man looked up and saw the mountain which stood upon their right covered with horsemen in chariots of fire, and others surrounding the person of his holy master, whereat he perceived that Jehovah had come to protect him.

When the Syrians drew near to enter the city, their sight was confused so that they did not recognize Elisha, who told them that the prophet whom they sought was not in Dothan, but that he would lead them to the place where he might be found. The army accordingly followed him without knowing whither they were going, or being able to perceive their real surroundings,

until they were led into the city of Samaria and into the power of the Israelites. Elisha now restored their sight and they were made to discover how they had been led by the prophet whom they were seeking. Jehoram now asked Elisha if he should destroy the Syrians, but the prophet forbade him, saying, "Wouldest thou smite them, whom thou hast taken captive, with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." And thus were the Syrians permitted to return to their country without suffering the loss of one of their number, a mercy which they ill requited, as we shall soon see.

THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA AND A MIRACULOUS TERMINATION OF THE FAMINE.

Benhadad not long thereafter undertook another war against Jehoram, whose kindness should have secured his friendship, but he was a cruel man and was led by his greed and ambition to fight against Israel, hoping to possess the country and the rich spoils it afforded. Therefore raising a great army he laid siege to Samaria and kept the people within the walls so long that a great famine ensued, food becoming at length so scarce that an ass's head sold for four pieces of silver, and even cannibalism was resorted to. As Jehoram was passing along the wall still encouraging his soldiers to hold out against the enemy, a woman came crying to him with the complaint that she had made a compact with another woman on the preceding day that they should sacrifice each a child to serve them for food, and that accordingly she had boiled her son and eaten him yesterday, but now to-day the other woman had hidden her son and refused to sacrifice him as she had promised.

The horror of his situation was now fully revealed to Jehoram, who put on sackcloth and rent his clothes with grief and despondency. But believing that his desperate strait was due to Elisha, who, he thought, withheld the relief which he was able to give, sent an executioner to cut off the prophet's head. But before the headsman reached the house of Elisha, Jehoram repented his rash order and ran himself to prevent the execution. Elisha was sitting in a room counselling with the elders when God revealed to him Jehoram's purpose, and turning he said to those about him that a messenger had been sent to take his head, but ordered them to hold the man in the door, for the king would run after him to prevent the execution, which came to pass as he had spoken. The king ran with all haste and reached Elisha's house while the messenger was attempting an entrance, and gaining the prophet's presence he humbled himself and asked what he should do.

Elisha had compassion upon the king and his sorely oppressed subjects, and declared to him that on the morrow such an abundance of food would be provided that a measure of fine flour would be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a like small sum. One of the king's lords made light of the prophecy saying, "If the Lord made windows in heaven might this thing be;" but

Elisha assured him he should see it with his own eyes, but that on account of his mocking he would not be permitted to break his fast.

At this time there were six lepers sitting without the gates of Samaria, who, because of their affliction, were indifferent as to the manner of death which they might meet, and being pressed for hunger determined to go to the Syrian camp. It was death by starvation to remain beside the gate, and if the Syrians should deny their request for food and kill them, even this alternative would be better than the former. So, early in the morning they went out to the enemy's camp, but as they drew near they could discover no man, which was a thing so surpassing strange that they stopped to consider the cause. Then they went on again and found the Syrian camp entirely deserted, with all the arms, provisions and treasure left behind, as if they had been left on account of precipitate flight. And so it proved, for God had wrought another miracle to save the Israelites, in fulfilment of Elisha's prophecy. "For the Lord had made the host of Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host; and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life."

The six lepers went from tent to tent taking as much provisions as they could and such an amount of gold and silver as they could carry, and then went back to Samaria to spread the joyful news. When Jehoram heard what the lepers had said, he suspected that the Syrians had drawn off and laid themselves in ambush, to entice the people out of the city. But he followed the advice of one of his servants and sent five horsemen to discover if the enemy was hid near by; these went out as far as the Jordan, and saw the road scattered with garments and vessels, by which they knew that the Syrians had retreated and gone back to their own country. The Israelites now issued out of the city and found such a quantity of provisions in the abandoned camp that flour and barley were sold for the prices that Elisha had predicted; but the mocking lord was not permitted to enjoy any of this abundance, for as he stood as a guard at the gate, the multitude came out in such crowds and confusion that he was trampled to death.

THE SEVEN YEARS' FAMINE IN JUDAH.

Elisha, it would appear, never wandered far from the district in which his first miracles were performed, and had become known to all the people therein, respected by them for his uprightness and regarded as a man of divine character. On one of his visits to the Shunamite woman, whose son, it will be remembered, he restored to life, he told her that a famine would come upon the land in a short while, and that it would not cease for seven years. He advised her to go to some other country and remain there until the

land prospered again. The woman accepted his advice and went away, leaving all her possessions without any one to care for them during her absence, by reason of which others who remained in the stricken district took charge of the property, and when the woman returned, after the seven years had elapsed, refused to surrender it to her. It so happened that on the day that Gehazi was telling the king, at his request, of the wonderful things Elisha had done, this same woman came to him with her complaint that she had been dispossessed of her property during her absence from Judah, and that those who wrongfully held possession refused to yield it up. Gehazi was a most important witness in her behalf, for he now testified to the things which Elisha had done for her and also of the truth of her complaint. Jehoram accordingly appointed an officer to remove the trespassers and to restore to her all the fields, and the fruits thereof since the day of her departure, which was promptly done.

When the famine was over, Benhadad fell sick, and being afraid that he should die, sent an officer of his court named Hazael with a rich present to Elisha to inquire of the prophet if he should recover. Hazael set out with forty camels loaded with every good thing of Damascus, to seek the prophet, and when he had found him, made him a present of the articles he brought, and besought Elisha to foretell the issue of Benhadad's illness. The prophet did not wish to answer the inquiry, but being urged said, somewhat evasively, "Go, say unto him, thou mayest certainly recover; howbeit, the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die." At this Hazael was confused, for he dreaded to carry back such a message, but as he looked somewhat sorrowfully, Elisha began to weep, and upon being asked the cause, he replied that it was because of the afflictions that he, Hazael, would inflict upon Israel, for Elisha foresaw that this man would become king over Syria.

When Hazael returned to Benhadad he told the king that he would surely recover, but on the morrow the wicked messenger, prompted by the ambition which Elisha's words had created in him, took a thick cloth, and saturating it with water held it over Benhadad's face until he was suffocated. After committing this crime Hazael proclaimed himself king, and was accepted by the people as their ruler.

JEHU IS ANOINTED KING OVER JUDAH.

The latter end of Jehoram's reign was marked by acts of wickedness which brought troubles thick upon him. The Edomites revolted against him and set up a new king, but Jehoram went to Zair with his army and there fell upon the rebels with such suddenness that they were unprepared for the attack, and fled without offering any resistance; the Edomites rallied, however, afterward, and were joined by the people of Libnah, which gave them sufficient power to maintain their independence. Jehoram soon after died, leaving his kingdom in a disturbed and miserable condition. He was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, who, after reigning one year in Jerusalem, joined forces with Joram, son of Ahab,

in a war against Hazael. Some confusion of names arises here by reason of the fact that Jehoram and Joram are the same name, but one of these was the son of Jehoshaphat, while the other was the son of Ahab, and both ruled contemporaneously over tribes of Israel.

In a battle with the Syrians at Ramoth, Joram was wounded, and he went back to Jezreel to be treated for his hurt. During the period of his inability he was visited by Ahaziah, thus leaving both kingdoms without a ruler. Elisha embraced this opportunity to dispossess the wicked Ahaziah, whose acts had all been impious. He accordingly sent one of his messengers with a box of oil to Ramoth-gilead to anoint Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, to be king over Judah. The young man executed his commission as he had been directed, and when Jehu was anointed the messenger bade him to punish the house of Ahab and execute vengeance upon the head of Jezebel for ordering the prophets slain. So saying he opened the door and fled, for fear that some of the friends of Ahaziah might apprehend him.

Jehu came out from the chamber in which he had been anointed and announced to the people that he had been called to rule Israel, whereupon all who heard him took off their garments and cast them under his feet as a sign of their loyalty, and then blew trumpets to announce the proclamation. Jehu at once set about the destruction of Ahab's house by raising an army and going to Jezreel. As he came in sight of the city a watchman on the walls espied him and reported it to Joram, who sent out a horseman to inquire of Jehu if his mission was that of peace. When the messenger came up with Jehu and made his inquiry, he was coarsely answered and bidden to go behind. When the messenger failed to return a second was sent out, but he too was ordered to the rear, and a third likewise. By his furious riding Joram discovered that the leader of the approaching army was Jehu, and he made ready to meet him.

The chariots were hurriedly ordered out, in one of which Joram was placed and Ahaziah rode in another. The two met Jehu in Naboth, where Ahab had caused the owner of a vineyard he coveted to be stoned, and asked if he came upon a mission of peace. To which Jehu replied, "What peace, so long as the iniquities of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?" At this answer Joram turned and fled, crying to Ahaziah that they were about to be made the victims of a treachery. As they retreated, Jehu pulled his bow and shot an arrow through Joram's back, so that it penetrated his heart. The body was then taken by a captain in Jehu's army and cast into the field of Naboth. Ahaziah sought to escape by way of the garden-house, but he was so badly wounded by an arrow that he died on the following day at Megiddo.

THE TERRIBLE DEATH OF JEZEBEL.

There was none to dispute the entrance of Jehu into Jezreel, and he made search quickly for Ahab's infamous widow, the terrible Jezebel, who had been

suffered so long to survive her iniquities, and to sow the earth with a seed of human thistles that had almost choked the growth of justice. This cunning woman tried to avert her just fate by disguising her appearance. She painted her face and put on a tawdry head-dress, like a serving-woman, and then gazed out of an upper window as a quiet spectator of what was going on below; but her discretion was confounded by God who caused her to inquire of Jehu as he rode beneath, "Had Zimri peace who slew his master?" Whereat Jehu looked up and asked, "Who is on my side? Who?" At the first glance



HORRIBLE DEATH OF THE INIQUITOUS JEZEBEL.

"So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses."—2 KINGS ix. 33.

he perceived that it was Jezebel who had spoken, and seeing three eunuchs standing beside her he bade them throw her down, which they immediately did, for they saw that Jehu was one in authority, and that he now had possession of the city. Jezebel's body fell upon the stone pavement below, and was so mangled that her blood was sprinkled upon the wall, and the horses trod her under foot. Here the body was permitted to remain for some hours and until Jehu had feasted, when he sent some of his men out to bury it, for, though an iniquitous woman, he desired that she be given burial as a king's daughter. But when those thus sent came to pick up the body they found it had been eaten by dogs until only the skull, feet and hands remained, thus literally fulfilling the prophecy of Elisha.

Jehu had made an excellent beginning in destroying the house and posterity of Ahab, but there were still seventy sons of the wicked king living, and to these Jehu dispatched letters, and also to the people of Samaria, challenging them to set up one of the seventy as king. But they were afraid, and sent back word that they would be his servants and in all things obey him as their rightful king. Then Jehu wrote a second letter, wherein he commanded the people to manifest their loyalty by sending to him on the morrow the heads of all the seventy sons. Accord-

ingly, the seventy were slain and their heads put into baskets and sent to Jehu at Jezreel, where he set them up in two rows before the gates as a warning, after which he ordered to be slain all the great men, kinsfolk, and priests that had served in the house of Ahab. After this Jehu went up to Samaria, but while on his way he met forty-two of Ahaziah's brethren at a shearing house, as they were travelling to Jezreel to salute Joram and Jezebel, not know-



SLAUGHTER OF AHAB'S SONS.

ing what fate had overtaken them. These Jehu ordered his men to take alive and to slay them at the shearing pit, which was promptly done.

DESTRUCTION OF THE WORSHIPPERS OF BAAL.

After slaying Ahaziah's brothers, Jehu resumed his journey and met Jehonadab, who was coming to meet him. Accepting his hand as a token of friendship, Jehu brought him into the chariot and together they rode to Samaria. Reaching the capital, he issued a proclamation ordering all the prophets and servants of Baal to meet him, to offer up a sacrifice to their god. He also threatened to punish with death all those who refused to obey the summons, pretending that his desire was to make a glorious feast in honor of the idol of the people. In response to this order all the priests,

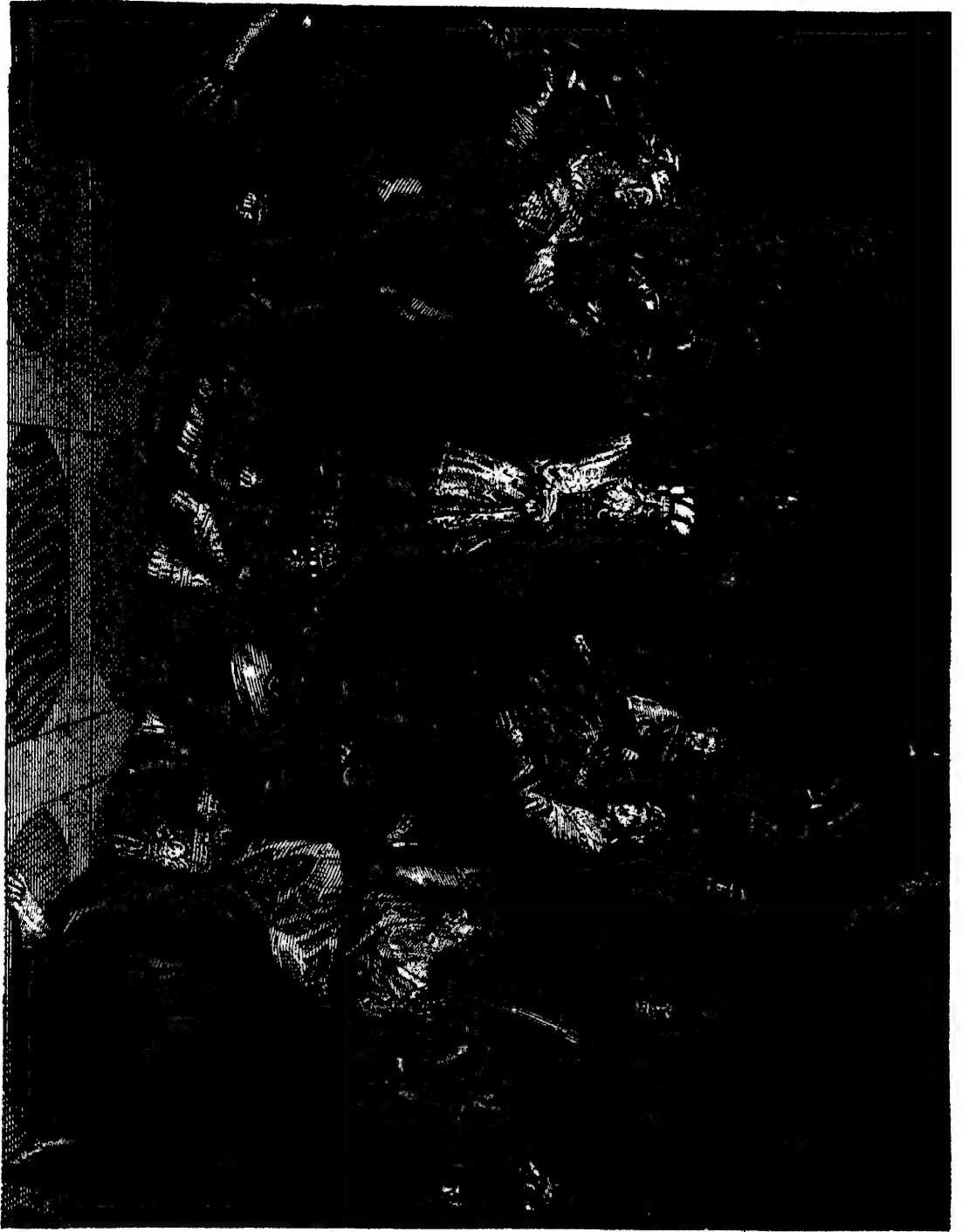
prophets and worshippers of Baal came to Samaria, being so vast in number that the house of Baal was filled to overflowing. When these idolaters assembled he ordered them to be clothed with vestments which were used in the idolatrous service. His next order was issued to Jehonadab, instructing him to have the worshippers observe strictly that none of the servants of God were among them. When the service had been made ready Jehu appointed eighty of his men as executioners. These he stationed at the door of the temple with instructions to begin the slaughter at a signal, and threatened that if any of those of Baal should escape, to punish with death those who permitted it to be so. Therefore, when the burnt-offerings had been made Jehu gave the signal, and his guards rushed in upon the worshippers with their swords and slew every one, so that the temple was filled with dead bodies, and not one escaped. When the slaughter was complete his soldiers were ordered to break all the images of Baal, and afterward to destroy the temple itself, so that no remnant of the worshippers or of the idol might remain in all Israel. The golden calves at Bethel and Dan were also destroyed, though they did not compose any part of the worship of Baal, but all kinds of idolatry were uprooted by an heroic remedy that turned the nation once more toward God.

Singular, almost beyond understanding, Jehu left off his zeal for Jehovah after destroying idolatry and fell into all the evil ways of Jehoram, which plunged Israel into sin again. This was followed by a war in which Hazael overcame the Israelites and laid all of western Palestine under tribute, so that at his death Jehu left the land in a more miserable condition—idolatry excepted—than he found it on usurping the throne. He died at Samaria and was buried there with the other kings of Israel. He reigned for twenty-eight years and was succeeded by his son, Jehoahaz, and his posterity recovered Israel, as will be seen.

The reign of Jehoahaz was unimportant beyond the interest which may attach to his wicked acts and the failure of his army in the field against Hazael, who prosecuted the war against Israel after Jehu's death. He was beaten in every battle, and was at last reduced to a kind of vassalage, being left only ten chariots and as many thousand footmen. He, too, was buried in Samaria, in the sepulchre with his father, and was succeeded by his son Joash, or Jehoash.

THE YOUNGEST KING OF ISRAEL.

Upon the death of Jehoahaz, Israel would have been left entirely without a lineal branch of the house of David had it not been for the daughter of Joram, who saved the infant Joash, son of Ahaziah, by keeping him in hiding for a period of six years, during which time a very wicked woman, Athaliah, ruled. Joash was finally proclaimed king, when but seven years of age, by the high-priest, Jehoida. Thus we find, for the second time, two kings of the same name, one ruling Israel and the other Judah, so that we are liable to



CROWNING THE INFANT JOASH.

Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason ! treason ! The priest said, Slay her not in the house of the Lord."

—2 CHRON. xxiii. 13, 14—

get them confused; but Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, was more wicked than his father, and his reign was of short duration, while Joash, the son of Ahaziah, proved himself a wise ruler, and with his acts we will therefore be most concerned.

Joash was crowned without the knowledge of Athaliah, who came into the Temple while Jehoida was anointing the young king. She raised the cry of treason, hoping to arouse the loyalty of her subjects, but she was intensely hated, and at a command of the priest she was taken out by the pillars of the Temple and there slain. Joash set about building up the waste wrought by Benhadad and Hazael. He was as resolute as Jehu had been in prohibiting the worship of Baal, but fell into the ways of Jeroboam and permitted sacrifices to the golden calf, which it seems had been set up again at Bethel. He visited the aged prophet Elisha and was by him warmly received, though at this time he had grown out of his youth and become a warrior. In response to his request for a prophecy concerning his affairs with the Syrians, Joash was given a sign of the victories he should obtain. Elisha bade him draw his bow before a window, and laying his hands upon the arms of the king, told him to shoot. The other arrows in his quiver the king was commanded to draw and throw upon the ground. Joash, however, only threw down three arrows, whereat Elisha was vexed and told him that now he should gain only three victories, whereas, had he thrown them all down, it would have been given him to destroy the Syrians, root and branch. After this Elisha died, and was buried in a sepulchre hewn out of the rock, near Jerusalem.

A DEAD BODY IS BROUGHT TO LIFE BY TOUCHING THE BONES OF ELISHA.

Joash made war against the Syrians and, as Elisha had prophesied, beat them in three great battles, but their power was not broken, and they afterward oppressed Israel sorely, but not until Joash had departed from the good work he had early begun of repairing the Temple, and was no longer advised by the high-priest Jehoida, by whose counsel he had been long governed.

The Moabites invaded the country and laid waste a considerable portion; it was during this invasion that a singular miracle was wrought, the object of which it has not been given us to know. A party of Moabites, while carrying the dead body of one of their comrades for burial, sighted a company of men whom they took to be enemies, and to relieve themselves of the body they thrust it into a sepulchre which chanced to be near them, and would have retreated. However, this sepulchre was that in which Elisha had been laid, and when the body of their comrade touched the bones of the prophet he was restored to life and stood upon his feet.

Hazael, king of Syria, defeated Joash in many engagements, and placed him in sore straits, but the fortunes of battle turned again in his favor, and before his death he had recovered all the cities that had been wrested from his father.

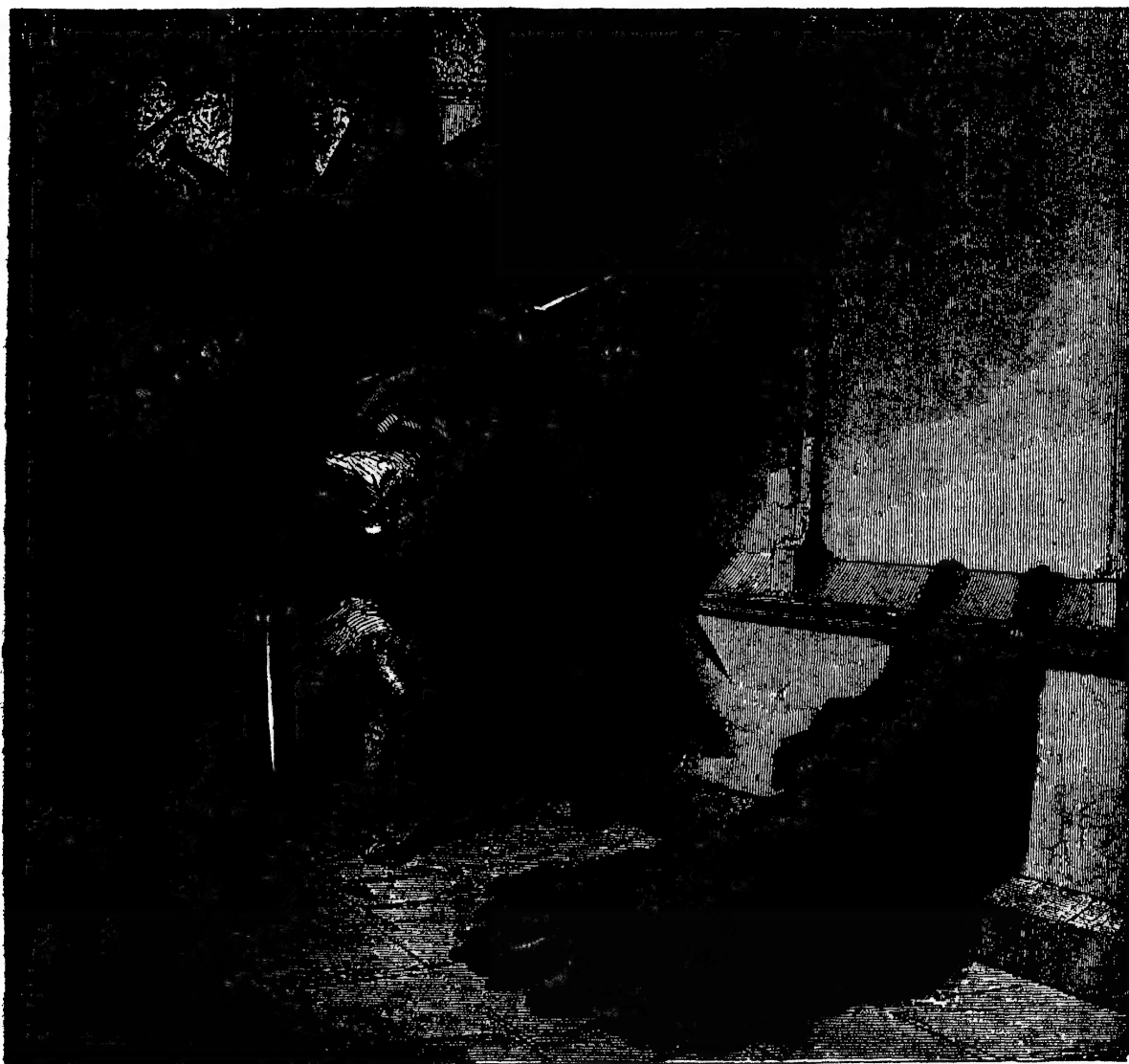
The two kings, Joash of Judah, and Joash of Israel, also fought against each other, and the one of Israel attacked Jerusalem with such success that he broke down six hundred feet of the wall of the city, and carried away all the gold, silver and vessels found in the Temple, and brought them to Samaria. He also fought against Amaziah, the successor of his namesake, but was beaten on every side and finally fled to Millo badly wounded. While lying in bed, helpless from his hurts, two of his servants set upon him with swords and destroyed him, in the forty-seventh year of his age. His burial place was also Samaria.

Amaziah succeeded his father, Joash, as king of Judah, ascending the throne in the twenty-fifth year of his age. He ruled with the wisdom of David, and won

AMAZIAH DRIVING THE EDMONTES OVER THE ROCKS OF PETRA.



many great victories. One of his first acts was to organize an army of three hundred thousand men, to which he added one hundred thousand picked soldiers of Israel, whom he hired for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars' worth of silver, to go with him against the Edomites. When his expedition



THE MURDER OF QUEEN ATHALIAH.

"So they laid hands on her; and when she was come to the entering of the horse-gate by the king's house, they slew her there."—2 CHRON. xxiii. 15.

started, however, he was commanded by a prophet to dismiss his mercenaries, whose loyalty could not be depended upon. These men of Israel, out of revenge for their dismissal, plundered many cities of Judah, but Amaziah did not turn back to punish them, but continued on to the Valley of Salt, where he engaged an army of the Edomites and slaughtered ten thousand of their

soldiers, and destroyed as many more by driving them over the rocks of Petra, the capital of Idumea. He also captured the city and changed its name to that of Joktheel, which, in the Hebrew, signifies *Possession of God*.

In the midst of his great successes Amaziah turned from God and became idolatrous, setting up images at Mount Seir, to which he made sacrifices. When reproved by one of his prophets he rebuked him bitterly for daring to advise him, whereupon the prophet foretold that he would be destroyed for his iniquity.

The period of his decline now began, for he was soon after beaten by his enemies and a conspiracy was formed against him in his own house, which he sought to escape by fleeing to Lachish, but he was here overtaken and killed. Azariah became his successor, and though only sixteen years of age when he began to rule, he displayed a wisdom beyond his years. Instead of engaging in devastating wars he confined himself to increasing the glory of his kingdom in peaceful ways. He built Elath and restored it to Judah, and set his people in industrial ways. His reign lasted fifty-two years, but in the latter end he was stricken with leprosy, and had to give the government over to the charge of his son, Jotham, who exalted the kingdom.

JEROBOAM'S PROSPEROUS REIGN.

Jeroboam, the second, succeeded Joash, his father, as the ruler of Israel, and reigned for forty-one years at Samaria. He was fourth in descent from Jehu, and proved himself to be the ablest king Israel had yet possessed. When he assumed authority the country was scarcely more than a dependency, so greatly reduced was it by the conquests of the Syrians. But he was a man of great courage, and set resolutely about the restoration of his dominions, being indeed a saviour for Israel. He went to war with the Syrians, who were also being pressed at the same time by their enemies from the east. This gave Jeroboam a great advantage, which he employed with such success that he recovered to Israel all that district which lay east of the Jordan, and captured Ammon and Moab. Afterward he attacked Damascus, and though beaten before its walls, he laid the surrounding territory under tribute. His death occurred about 750 B. C., but under what circumstances is not recorded.

Zachariah succeeded Jeroboam, but after a rule of only six months he was treacherously slain by Shallum, who in turn was assassinated in the first month of his reign by Menahem. This cruel man also carried a force of conspirators into Tiphseh, where he murdered the inhabitants and continued his bloody course up the coast to Tirzah, sparing neither women, children, nor the aged, and, having forced a submission from the people, he ascended the throne and ruled ten years in Samaria. Pul, king of Syria, brought a great army and besieged Samaria, but was persuaded by a present of nearly two million dollars' worth of silver to spare the place and become an ally. This amount Menahem raised by making a levy on all the rich men of his kingdom, but

he did not live long after this alliance with Pul. His son Pekahiah succeeded him, and reigned for two years, when Remaliah, a captain in the king's army, brought his company to the palace and killed not only Pekahiah, but also his counsellors and fifty Gileadites, who were visiting him. Remaliah then seized the throne, but it is not recorded how long he reigned. He was succeeded by his son Pekah, who retained the rulership for twenty years.

THE ASSYRIAN INVASION.

During the reign of Pekah, Israel was invaded by the great Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser, who came with such a mighty force that he captured several of the most important cities in Pekah's kingdom, and took possession of all the land of Naphtali, and carried his captives to Assyria, where they were made slaves. Pekah, in turn, made an alliance with Rezin, of Syria, and tried to recover his losses by a war against Jotham, of Judah, but he was also beaten by that king, and came back to Samaria, to perish soon after by the hands of Hoshea, who ruled in his stead.

Affairs in Judah had not been more prosperous after Jotham's death than those of Israel after the reign of Joash. Ahaz succeeded his father, Jotham, but did not profit by the good example of his predecessor. He was twenty years old at the beginning of his reign, and ruled at Jerusalem for sixteen years. He was an idolater from the beginning, and began his administration by the performance of heathen rites, and made his sacrifices "on the hills and under every green tree," instead of at the Temple.

Ahaz was besieged at Jerusalem in the third year of his reign by Rezin and Pekah, but the fortifications were too strong for them to scale, and the two armies drew off. Rezin now turned his attention to Elath, and after capturing the city he drove out the Jews and re-peopled it with Syrians. The occupation of a rich district of his dominions by Syrians grieved Ahaz greatly, and to recover possession of Elath he sent to Tiglath-pileser for help. This assistance it was not expected would be given out of friendship, so Ahaz sent his messengers loaded with all the gold, silver and other treasures that were in the Temple, accompanying these rich presents with a letter, in which he begged the Assyrian monarch to come and deliver him out of the hands of the Syrians. Tiglath-pileser accepted the reward offered, and sent his army against Rezin, whom he killed, and then captured Damascus, carrying the people away captives to Kir.

While at Damascus, Ahaz saw an altar which so pleased his fancy that he sent a design of it to his priest, Urijah, at Jerusalem, with instructions to erect one exactly like it. The work was done so expeditiously that upon his return he found the altar ready, and he immediately made sacrifice of burnt-offering upon it. Nor did he cease his sacrilege with this one iniquitous act, but sent to the Temple of the Lord, and had brought the brazen altar, which he now placed in an inferior position to his own, intending to use it as an oracle to

inquire by. He then commanded that all the morning and evening sacrifices of burnt-offering, of drink-offering and meat-offering be made upon the altar he had erected. But he had not even yet completed his sacrilege, for he went again to the Temple and cut off the borders of the basins and lavers, "and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it, and put it on a pavement of stones." Besides this, he caused images to be built and set up in many places about Jerusalem for the people to worship, and even sacrificed children to the idol Moloch.

Yet for all these iniquitous practices God did not cut off Ahaz immediately, but extended His mercies for the sake of His promises to David. However, he was not suffered to prosper, for even the victories gained by the assistance of Tiglath-pileser availed him nothing, since all the spoils and captured possessions were taken by the Assyrian conqueror, so that by reason of the payment of such a quantity of riches to Tiglath-pileser for his help, he was in reality left poorer than when he undertook the war against Rezin and Pekah. It also appears that he lost the confidence and respect of his own subjects, for though, in 2 Kings xvi., it is recorded that at his death he "was buried with his fathers in the City of David," 2 Chron. xxviii. 27 tells us that

"Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem, but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel." Since all the previous kings were laid in a royal sepulchre provided especially for them, we must conclude that there was a good reason for not giving the body of Ahaz the same burial accorded to his predecessors.

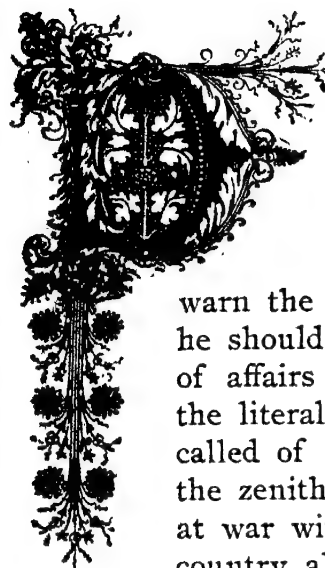


SCRIBES AND INTERPRETERS OF THE LAW.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE STORY OF JONAH.

Jonah.



JURING the reign of Jeroboam II., about B. C. 860, Jonah, a prophet who is little mentioned in the Bible, was sent by God to Nineveh on a purpose not definitely understood, but presumably to influence the king of Assyria from undertaking an expedition against Israel. The records make it appear that his mission was to warn the king that if he did not repent of his sins and turn to God he should perish, but the results of his preaching and the condition of affairs in Israel at the time, render it improbable that this was the literal object of his visit. At the particular time when he was called of God to proceed to Nineveh the Assyrian Empire was at the zenith of its power and was overrunning Syria. Israel was also at war with Syria, and, as already related, had recovered from that country all of Palestine east of the Jordan. This success would naturally excite the jealousy of Assyria, which was contending with Syria, not only to punish that nation for some grievance, but for new possessions as well, for all wars in that age had their chief object in spoliation. It is therefore even more than probable that Jonah's real mission was to dissuade the Assyrian king from invading Israel, or that portion recovered from Assyria, which interpretation is strengthened by the entire book of Jonah.

We are told, in the opening chapter, that "the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness (designs) is come up before me."

For some reason Jonah was averse to going to Nineveh, and instead of obeying the instructions which God had given him, he went to Joppa and engaged passage on a vessel going to Tarshish. The Lord was offended at his disobedience, and as a punishment sent a great storm, which caused the ship to become unmanageable and threatened it with destruction. To save the vessel from foundering, the sailors were ordered to throw overboard all the freight; but this failed to diminish the danger, for the wild waves dashed furiously over the bark and were filling it with water, which the sailors could not bail out fast enough to give them any hope of keeping the vessel much longer afloat. In this dire extremity the vessel's captain found Jonah asleep in the boat and, amazed at his apparent indifference to the danger, called on him to pray that they might be saved. Whether Jonah humbled himself before God

we know not, but in his shame for having disobeyed the command given him to go to Nineveh, it is probable that he could not summon courage to offer a petition even for his own preservation. In any event God prompted a belief among the sailors that the storm was the result of His anger for a sin committed by some one on board, so they cast lots to determine upon whom the evil rested, and it fell upon Jonah. The sailors then asked him to what country he belonged and also what sin he had committed, to which he replied that he was a Hebrew and feared "the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and dry land." At this the sailors were afraid, and asked him why he had fled from the presence of the Lord, and what they might do to him that the sea should be calmed. And he answered, "Take me up and cast me forth



JONAH CAST INTO THE SEA.

"So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea."—JONAH i. 15.

into the sea: so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

The sailors were reluctant to throw him overboard, even when Jonah told them that he merited this punishment, and that only by thus sacrificing him would the storm subside. They rowed hard to gain the shore, but finding their energies expended and their labor vain, they called to God not to lay upon them innocent blood, and to pardon the act by which they only hoped to save their own lives; so they threw the prophet into the sea, whereupon the storm immediately ceased.

Though God had resolved to punish Jonah, He did not intend to destroy him, and therefore prepared a miraculous means for saving his life. As Jonah

fell into the sea a great fish swallowed him, of what species we are not informed, nor is it important to know, since with God all things are possible; and whether the fish were a whale, shark, or now extinct creature, is wholly without consequence.

Jonah remained in the fish's belly for three days, during which time he prayed God to forgive his transgression, acknowledging the justice of his punishment, and giving praise for the mercies and blessings shown him. At the



JONAH WARNING THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH.

"And he cried and said, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown."—JONAH ii. 4.

end of three days Jonah was vomited up by the fish upon dry land, and was again commanded to go to Nineveh.

NINEVEH IS CONVERTED AND JONAH IS DISPLEASED.

This time Jonah obeyed the instructions God had given and went to Nineveh, and on the way apprised those whom he met that within forty days the city should be overthrown. When he came within the gates he preached to the people and to the king, exhorting them not to offend God but to leave off their evil designs, for surely the Lord had said He would destroy the place and all that was in it. His exhortations and prophecy greatly distressed the king, who now put on sackcloth and ordered all his subjects to observe a

fast and to praise God. So pious did the people appear that "God repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them; and he did it not." The refusal of God to destroy Nineveh, as Jonah had prophesied, greatly angered the prophet, who considered that the people would now hold him in disrespect for having falsely predicted the city's destruction, and in his melancholy he called on God to take his life, since his disappointment was more than he could bear. He went out of the city and on the east side made a seat, where he rested until he could see what should be done to the city. God, observing him thus shelterless, caused a gourd to spring up out of the ground and to spread its thick vine over him for a shelter from the sun, and to protect him from the dews at night. At this Jonah was greatly pleased, but on the second night a worm gnawed the vine so that it withered, and when day had dawned God caused a hot east wind to spring up which parched the earth, while the sun now beat down on Jonah's unprotected head until he fainted from the heat, and again wished that he was dead.

"And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? and he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. Then saith the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it to grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?"

THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL.

In the twelfth year of the reign of Ahaz over Judah, Hoshea, the son of Elah, ascended the throne of Israel in Samaria, having assassinated Pekah to gain this dignity. Under him the ruin which set in with the rule of Jehoram, became complete. In morals he was hardly so good as the wicked kings who preceded him, while his abilities were of the most meagre character. He reinstated the worship of Baal and of other gods; and the horrid sacrifices of children, who were given to be burned in the arms of Moloch, became a daily observance with the people. He also made groves and set up images therein as Ahab had done, and bowed before a host of wooden gods, besides renewing practices, first made common in the worship of Ashtaroath, too revolting to be chronicled. Under him, indeed, the people sunk into the lowest depths of depravity and infamy. His punishment was long deferred, but it was sent upon him at last. In the ninth and last year of his reign, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and successor of Tiglath-pileser, became offended with him because he had sent rich presents to So, king of Egypt, but had withheld such evidences of regard and friendship from himself. Concluding that Israel was seeking a league with Egypt, Shalmaneser entered Israel at the head of a large army and laid siege to Samaria. The city held out for a period of three years but succumbed at last, and the Assyrians took Hoshea and all his subjects that were in Israel and carried them away captives to the cities of Halah and

Habor. These places, however, could not contain them all, so that many of the captives were sold into bondage to the Medes.

The depopulation of Samaria and other cities of Israel was followed by a vast immigration of Assyrians from the cities of Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, who quickly re peopled the towns, so that all of northern Palestine fell into possession of Israel's enemies. Thus terminated the kingdom of Israel, having endured two hundred and fifty-five years under nineteen kings and nine dynasties.

HEZEKIAH, THE SECOND DAVID.

Hezekiah, the son and successor of Ahaz, was twenty-five years of age when he ascended the throne, his accession being in the third year of the reign of Hoshea. He began immediately to undo the evil institutions of his father, one of his first acts being the reopening of the Temple and restitution of the things that had been taken from it. He also appointed priests of the Levites to cleanse the House of the Lord and to renew the sacrifices therein. This work of cleansing occupied sixteen days, at the end of which time Hezekiah called the rulers together, and taking seven each of bullocks, rams, goats and lambs he went into the Temple to dedicate it anew and offer them up as a sacrifice for the sins of his people. This sacrifice was made a feast of rejoicing, at which the priests played on cymbals, harps and trumpets, while the people sang songs of praise. There were also brought during the feast, as contributions from the people, seventy oxen, a hundred rams and two hundred lambs, all of which were offered up by the priests.

Hezekiah's next act was to renew the Feast of the Passover, which had not been observed since the days of Solomon, and at this feast he made a covenant with God and sent letters to all of the ten tribes asking them to come and celebrate with him. His hope evidently was to unite Israel and Judah, though the Bible narrative tells us that all those of the ten tribes had been carried away captive by the Assyrian conqueror, as already described. It is possible, indeed probable, that there were still remnants left in the far south that had escaped captivity, to whom Hezekiah sent his invitation. If, as the records state, all of Israel had been carried to Babylon, Hezekiah's letters may have been addressed to the Assyrians who had been brought to re people the cities of Israel. This version is not improbable, because we are told that the Assyrian immigrants were punished for their idolatry in Samaria and other places in Israel by lions that were sent to destroy them, but upon learning that this visitation was on account of their idolatry they sent to the Assyrian king for a prophet of Israel to come and teach them how to worship the true God. Such a teacher was sent, who, though not able to wean them from their own gods, effected a great reformation that resulted in the people becoming renowned for their charity. Ever afterward they were called the Samaritans. One of Christ's most beautiful parables illustrates the kindness of these people.

Though the transplanted Assyrians, who now occupied Israel, were inclined to generosity and goodness, they refused to participate in the Passover, and even sent back a scornful reply. A few, who were probably Israelites, accepted the invitation, and all of Judah came to the feast. At this feast those who participated renewed their vows, and as an earnest of their intention to serve God, gathered all the images they could find, also the altar of Ahaz, and threw them into the Kidron.

MIRACULOUS DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB'S ARMY.

There was peace and plenty in all Judah for the first fourteen years of Hezekiah's reign, at the end of which time a great force of Assyrians, under King Sennacherib, invaded the country and set siege to all the walled cities and took them one after another until only Jerusalem was left. His immense army and invariable victories destroyed the courage of Hezekiah, who sent ambassadors to Sennacherib at Lachish to inquire what tribute he would accept to withdraw his forces from Judah. The Assyrian monarch replied that he would give the country peace and retire to his own land upon payment of a sum equal to five hundred thousand dollars, which was cheerfully paid. But upon receiving the money Sennacherib's cupidity was only increased, and he sent his army, under three of his best generals, to besiege Jerusalem.

When the Assyrians had surrounded the city they sent letters to Hezekiah, asking why he refused to open the gates to receive the army, at the same time admonishing him that if he continued to oppose them they would enter by force and treat him as an enemy. They further demanded a payment similar to that which Hezekiah had made to Sennacherib, as the price of their withdrawal. As the king of Judah had exhausted his treasures in paying the tribute to Sennacherib, it was impossible to comply with this second demand, and despairing of his ability to defend the city, he clothed himself in sackcloth, and going into the Temple prayed to God for deliverance from his enemies. He also sent priests to Isaiah, asking that prophet to pray for Judah, and to help him save the country from the destruction that threatened. Isaiah ordered the priests to return forthwith to Hezekiah and to tell him not to be afraid of the boastful words of the Assyrians, for God would cause them to abandon the siege, and that Sennacherib would speedily return to his own country, where he would die by the sword of one of his people.

When Hezekiah heard the prophecy of Isaiah he was no longer concerned for his safety, knowing now that God had heard his prayers. On the same night the Lord sent a plague among the Assyrians, by which one hundred and eighty-five thousand were destroyed. In the morning the remnant fled out of Judah and to their own country. Sennacherib returned to Nineveh, where he soon after perished by the sword of his two sons while worshipping in the idol-house of Nisroch.



MIRACULOUS DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB'S ARMY.

"And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valor . . . in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land."—2 CHRON. xxxii. 21.

HEZEKIAH APPROACHES DEATH, BUT IS MIRACULOUSLY CURED.

Shortly after the deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib, Isaiah went to Hezekiah and bade him prepare for death, since God had given him to know that his end was near at hand. At this time the king was confined to his bed by a carbuncle that gave him great pain, so that the words of the prophet seemed to foretell the result of his affliction. When Hezekiah heard what was said he turned his face to the wall and wept bitterly, not because of his fear of death, but because he regretted that he was to be called in the midst of his labors of rebuilding the Temple and bringing Judah to righteousness. The zeal and virtue thus exhibited by Hezekiah moved God to spare his life, and Isaiah was sent back to tell the king that his prayer for a prolongation of his years had been heard, and that in three days he should be healed and his life spared for fifteen more years. Then Isaiah made a poultice of figs and bound it upon the boil, as the Lord directed, and in three days his recovery was complete. But Hezekiah desired the prophet to show him by some sign that his days should be extended for the time promised, whereupon Isaiah made the sun to move forward ten degrees, telling him that this should be the sign. Still Hezekiah was not satisfied, for he said to the prophet, "It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees, nay, but let the shadow return *back* ten degrees." This sign was also given him, and he was then convinced that the promise would be fulfilled.

The king of Babylon, hearing of what had been done for Hezekiah, sent letters and a rich present to him by his ambassadors, under pretense of encouraging his friendship, but in reality to discover the wealth and condition of Judah, and whether it was an inviting field for invasion. Hezekiah received the ambassadors with great cordiality, and in a spirit of vanity and self-glorification he exhibited to them all his immense riches that had accumulated under the system of tithes which he established after holding the Feast of the Passover, and "there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not."

Isaiah was greatly displeased at the vanity and imprudence of Hezekiah, and coming to him, asked who were the visitors and what he had done. To this the king replied truthfully, telling him that the ambassadors were come from Babylon, and that he had showed them every rich and valuable thing in his kingdom.

Then spoke the prophet to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the Lord. Behold, the days come that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the Lord." He also prophesied that some of his posterity would become servants in the palace of Babylonian kings.

Hezekiah was very much cast down by the prophecy of Isaiah, knowing that all would come to pass, for he had received many evidences of the Divine

power of the prophet. Acknowledging, therefore, that what God had willed could not be set aside, he prayed that these evils should not befall Judah during his life, but that peace might be given him to the end of his days. Hezekiah devoted his latter years to the improvement of Jerusalem, his principal work being the building of an immense pool and conduit by which fresh water was supplied to the city. He died at the age of fifty-four, having reigned twenty-nine years, and was buried in Jerusalem. Hezekiah was childless a greater portion of his life, but when past forty years of age he married a woman named Hephzibah, by whom he had one son, Manasseh, who succeeded his father as ruler of Judah when but twelve years of age.

THE CAPTURE AND RESTORATION OF MANASSEH.

Manasseh fell into the hands of evil counsel, and before he had become of age the people, whom Hezekiah had done so much for by way of reformation, had relapsed into idolatry and had profaned the Temple by setting therein wooden images, to which they paid their daily devotions. Manasseh carried his iniquities yet further, for he killed all the righteous men in his country, and was as zealous in destroying every trace of the true worship and substituting idolatry as his father had been in purifying the kingdom. Men were to remonstrate with him and to prophesy the miseries that he would upon himself and people if he continued in his iniquities, but this advice not heeded, and God sent the kings of Babylon and Chaldea to punish him. These kings overran all Judah, laying waste its cities, killing the people, destroying the fields, and at last captured Manasseh himself and carried him away to Babylon bound in chains.

How long he remained in Babylon, or how he spent the time is not recorded, but Josephus tells us that he repented heartily of his sins and lifted up his prayers to the living God, who at length caused him to be restored to his kingdom. Upon Manasseh's return, he tried to repair some of the great injury he had done by destroying idols wherever they could be found, and by devoting himself to a religious life. He did not neglect Jerusalem, however, for he repaired the old walls and added a new one, and fortified them with many lofty towers. The latter years of his life were spent in such piety that "he was a pattern for imitation." He died at the age of sixty-seven, and was buried in a sepulchre in his own garden.

AMON IS MURDERED AND JOSIAH BECOMES KING.

became the successor of Manasseh, who was his father, but after reigning two years he was treacherously slain in his palace by his own servants, who, in turn, were killed by an incensed multitude, that afterward gave the throne to Amon's son, Josiah, who was only eight years of age. In early youth he manifested a kind and loving disposition and when twelve years old he began to devote himself to religion and the expulsion of idolatry from his



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DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN.

AVIL CO. LITH. PRINCE.

*"Then the King arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.
And *** he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel."*

Daniel 6:19:20.

THE BEAUTIFUL STORY.

kingdom. In many respects he was like David, and in piety and zeal for the establishing of the true worship of God he even excelled his great-grandfather, Hezekiah. Josephus attributes to him a wisdom far beyond what might be expected of one so young; for, in addition to his devotion to the service of God, he exhibited a rare judgment in the administration of the affairs of his kingdom. He cut down, and utterly destroyed, the groves that were devoted to strange gods, overthrew all their altars, broke images wherever he could find them, and then turned his attention to repairing the Temple, that had been desecrated by Manasseh. For this purpose he solicited donations of gold and silver from all his subjects who were able to contribute, by which means he secured a very large treasure, and appointed four curators to take charge of the Temple and its repairs.

When the rebuilding was completed it was found that there was a large surplus of gold and silver left over, and this he gave in charge of Eliakim, the high-priest, with instructions to have the overplus used in casting cups, dishes, etc., for service in the Temple. While bringing out the treasures from the place where they were stored Eliakim found the holy books of Moses, which he brought and read to the king. When he had heard the law thus read Josiah rent his garments, for he perceived how frequently his forefathers had disobeyed the commands, and that the punishment for disobedience was disinheritorance. He therefore called Eliakim, and Shaphan, a scribe, and sent them to a prophetess named Huldah, with a request that she pray to God to make him so righteous that he might not be in danger of being cast out of the country for the transgressions of his predecessors. The prophetess, however, could afford him no consolation, for she replied that God's decrees were irrevocable, and that sentence had already been given against the people; they would therefore be deprived of their present happiness and be taken captive as had already been prophesied; she told the messengers to say to Josiah that though God had given this decree against Judah, that because of his righteousness He would delay these calamities, but that after the king's death all the miseries promised would be sent upon the people.

JOSIAH EXECUTES VENGEANCE UPON THE FALSE PROPHETS.

When Josiah had received the reply of Huldah, he called together at Jerusalem all the priests and Levites, and people of every age, and had his scribes read to them all the books of Moses which set forth their duty to God. After the reading was concluded, he stood upon a pulpit and preached to his subjects the first sermon ever delivered. This discourse so pleased the people that upon his request they all made a covenant by oath to worship only God, keep the laws of Moses. Josiah did not cease his labor of converting the country with these exhibitions of his piety, but he also ordered to be destroyed the vessel that had been used in the service of idols, and slew all the priests that were not of the family of Aaron, or such as those who were not appointed

from among the Levites, as Moses had designated. He next ordered that all those buildings be destroyed that had been erected by Jeroboam wherein were set up golden calves for the people to worship, and upon the altars before these images he instructed his priests to collect the bones of Jeroboam's false prophets and burn them. Thus was the prediction, uttered by Jadon three hundred and sixty-one years before, literally fulfilled.

When the work of purification was complete, and not an idol or idolater was in all the land, Josiah called the people together again at Jerusalem and celebrated the feast of unleavened bread and of the Passover. On this occasion, which was the greatest since the day of Samuel, there were sacrificed thirty-seven thousand lambs and three thousand five hundred oxen.

JOSIAH IS SLAIN IN BATTLE.

Judah had undisturbed peace and prosperity for a period of thirty years under Josiah's wise rulership, all neighboring kings holding him in high regard, while within the kingdom there were no feuds or jealousies, the people being devotedly attached to him. His death was due to the maintenance of a principle which is now accepted by all the nations of the earth, viz.: a denial of the right of one nation to march its army across the territory of another without first gaining permission to do so; a violation of this principle is considered as equivalent to an invasion.

Necho, king of Egypt, raised an immense army for the purpose of invading Assyria, which had, only a short time before, been conquered by the Medes and Babylonians. To reach the Assyrians it was necessary for Necho to march across Palestine, which he undertook to do without so much as asking permission of Josiah. His passage, however, was disputed by such an army as Josiah was able hastily to summon. Necho sent a message to the king of Judah, upon finding himself opposed, to the effect that he had no designs upon any portion of Palestine, and hoped that Josiah would not provoke a quarrel with him by obstructing his march. Josiah was not to be intimidated, however, and set about posting his army. As he was driving from one wing of his army to another, giving orders, the Egyptians came up and discharged their arrows, one of which struck Josiah mortally. When their king fell the retreat was sounded by the Hebrews, who fled back to Jerusalem, carrying Josiah with them. He died a few days after, at the age of thirty-nine years, and was buried in the royal sepulchres, amid the universal mourning of his people. Jeremiah was for eighteen years contemporary with Josiah, residing in Jerusalem, and gives us to know how beloved was the king by a lamentation which the prophet composed, and which is recorded in 2 Chronicles xxxv.

Josiah was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz, at the age of twenty-three years. He was a coarse, brutish man, whose impious reign was cut short by Necho, under a strategy. As the Egyptian king was returning from his war in Assyria, he sent for Jehoahaz to visit him at Harnath, which was in Syria,

under pretense of a desire to honor him. But when Jehoahaz came to Necho he was put in irons and taken to Egypt, where he died, having reigned less than four years. The kingdom passed from Jehoahaz to his half-brother, Eliakim, whose name was then changed to Jehoiakim. This king ruled as a vassal of the Egyptians, to whom he was compelled to pay a tribute, laid as taxes upon the land (nearly \$200,000), annually.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Jehoiakim was no better than Jehoahaz, for he set up idols, and, in addition to leading the people into idolatry again, was merciless in his disposition and an oppressor of his subjects. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon, and no sooner had he gained the throne than he set about driving Necho out of Syria, which country the Egyptian king had conquered. In a battle which soon after took place, Necho lost many ten thousands of his men, and was driven out of Syria, so that Nebuchadnezzar passed the Euphrates and made himself master of all the country as far as Pelusium, excepting Judah. By his conquests three years later, however, he demanded tribute from Jehoiakim, which that king was forced to pay to preserve his kingdom. This tribute he paid two years, but on the third year Jehoiakim sought to take advantage of a war which had now broken out between Nebuchadnezzar and the king of Egypt, and believing that his enemy was too weak to enforce the tribute while fighting a powerful king, refused to continue the payments. His hopes, however, were upon a poor foundation, for Nebuchadnezzar soon routed the Egyptians, and now turned upon Judah his great and apparently invincible army. Jeremiah had daily prophesied concerning the destruction that would be brought upon Judah, but yet the king took no heed to his words and continued in his abominable ways. He had also foretold how Judah would rely upon Egypt in an evil hour, and that for this reliance Jerusalem would be captured and the king conquered. His prophecies, so far from warning the people, excited their anger and enmity. He was at length seized and brought before Jehoiakim for sentence. A majority of the judges and the king himself were in favor of killing him, but the elders refused to give their consent to so harsh a sentence, and succeeded in saving his life by admonishing the king that many other prophets had foretold the same things now prophesied by Jeremiah, and therefore it was wrong to punish him for the sins that others had committed. By these arguments Jehoiakim was persuaded to release the prophet, but a short while after, while the people were celebrating a fast in their temple, Jeremiah read all his prophecies from a book in which they had been written down by a scribe named Baruch. When the rulers heard of this act they seized the book and carried it to the king, but suffered Jeremiah and Baruch to escape. Jehoiakim, however, sent for one of his sons, named Jehudi, to read the book. As the prince proceeded, the king cut off from the manu-

script pieces as they were read and threw them into the fire until all the written prophecies were consumed. God now instructed Jeremiah to write anew his prophecies, to which were added that of the destruction of Judah, and with these the prophet vainly besought the people to turn from their wicked ways before it was too late.

The final catastrophe, as predicted by Jeremiah, came upon Jehoiakim in the seventh year of his reign. Nebuchadnezzar stirred up against him the Ammonites, Moabites and Syrians, who now overran Palestine and demanded the surrender of Jerusalem. Jehoiakim made no resistance, thinking if he admitted the enemy into the city that they would commit no depredations and would spare the lives of its inhabitants, but in this he was deceived, for Nebuchadnezzar slew a majority of the people, including many of the elders and people of dignity and position; he also killed Jehoiakim and ordered his body to be thrown before the walls, as unworthy of burial, and after committing other acts of wantonness seized three thousand of the principal persons of wealth of the city and carried them away as captives to Babylon. Among these captives was the prophet Ezekiel, who was a very young man at the time, and of whom we will read much hereafter.

THE BRIEF AND SAD RULE OF JEHOIACHIN.

Upon the death of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar permitted his son and rightful heir, named Jehoiachin, to ascend the throne, but this unfortunate prince had ruled only three months when Nebuchadnezzar, repenting that he had given the kingdom to one who must bear him a grudge for killing his father, sent his army and besieged Jehoiachin in Jerusalem. Knowing that he could not hold out long against the vastly superior numbers which Nebuchadnezzar had thrown around the city, and understanding the motive which had prompted the Babylonian king to make war, he surrendered the city, first exacting a promise that he and his people would be suffered to depart without molestation. This promise was broken on the moment that Jerusalem fell into his power, for Nebuchadnezzar ordered his officers to take the king and all his family captives, and bring them bound as slaves to him; he also commanded that the people, both old and young, be similarly taken, of which there were bound with thongs ten thousand eight hundred and thirty-two, and brought to him to serve in bondage. The kingdom was then given to Zedekiah, who was the uncle of the deposed king, but not until he had taken an oath of perpetual loyalty to Babylon and to abstain from any league of friendship with the Egyptians.

Zedekiah was twenty-one years of age when he assumed the nominal rulership of Judah. He is represented as a man devoid of the principles of justice and of a depraved disposition. His impiety produced alarm, for even those who were but little better in their morals than he foresaw that his end must be a bad one, while the condition of the people under such a ruler was

greatly debased. Jeremiah was much distressed at the wickedness of the young king, and besought him to abandon his evil ways, and above all to refuse to give credit to the false prophets who wrongfully advised him that neither Egypt nor Babylon would make war against him.

Zedekiah was at first disposed to believe the words of Jeremiah, and promised to do as he was bidden, but when again in the company of his friends, who were enemies of Jeremiah, he preferred their counsel. About this time Ezekiel sent a prophecy to Zedekiah fortelling the calamities that would come upon him, in which respect his predictions were identical with those of Jeremiah, excepting that the former declared Zedekiah should be taken captive, but that he would never see Babylon, while the latter prophesied that the king would be carried to Babylon in chains. On account of this disagreement in the two prophecies, Zedekiah declared that neither spoke the truth, and, therefore, continued his evil ways.

After a rule of eight years, Zedekiah revolted from Babylon and established a league with the Egyptians for the purpose of invading Syria. As soon as this intention became known to Nebuchadnezzar he entered Judah at the head of a great army, and after capturing many smaller towns started to besiege Jerusalem. The king of Egypt came to Zedekiah's relief, however, and engaged the king of Babylon in a battle, but with the most disastrous results to himself; for Nebuchadnezzar easily defeated him and drove him out of the country with immense loss. But this engagement saved Zedekiah and Jerusalem for a time, and was taken advantage of by the false prophets to foretell that the king of Babylon would not make war against Judah again, but would soon return the captives taken away at the time that Jerusalem surrendered. Jeremiah, however, prophesied to the contrary; declaring that Nebuchadnezzar would again besiege Jerusalem, and would destroy many of the people by famine and spoil every thing in the city, and then carry away the inhabitants that had survived into captivity, where they should serve for a period of seventy years.

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

The prophecies of Jeremiah were accepted by many of the people as a revelation of God, but the chief rulers charged him with unjustly alarming the country, and when he was on his way to Anathoth they seized him and cast him into a dungeon, the bottom of which was mire. Here he was kept for a time, but finally delivered, though not until he had been subjected to other torments. Though brought up out of the mire by an order from the king, he was not permitted to go free, but was detained in prison and fed on bread and water, to await Zedekiah's pleasure.

In the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and laid siege to Jerusalem, before which he built forts and set up battering rams and engines for throwing arrows and great stones. He remained before Jeru-

salem, hedging in all the inhabitants for eighteen months, at the end of which time a famine broke out in the city, followed by a plague that destroyed thousands of people. From his prison quarters Jeremiah cried out and sought to prevail with the king and his counsellors to open the gates and admit the enemy, for by so doing the people would be spared, but if they refused then the king of Babylon would capture Jerusalem at last and put every one therein to the sword.

The elders continued to advise Zedekiah against the warnings of Jeremiah, which they characterized as the vaporings of a madman, but the king, while



JEREMIAH CAST INTO THE DUNGEON.

• "And they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire : so Jeremiah sunk in the mire."—JER. xxxviii. 6.

afraid to openly reject the elders' advice, secretly sent for Jeremiah and asked him to foretell what circumstances would transpire, assuring him that he might speak freely without danger to his life. Jeremiah, thus assured, told the king again of what calamities would befall him if he held out and refused to surrender the city. Zedekiah was so impressed by Jeremiah's words that he desired to follow the prophet's advice, but was restrained by the fear that such a course, being so bitterly opposed by the people, would invite destruction at the hands of his subjects ; but he was just enough to give Jeremiah his freedom.

Every thing came to pass as the prophet had foretold. The Babylonians

captured Jerusalem at last, and committed it to pillage and the flames. Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadnezzar's principal general, first pillaged the Temple, from which he carried away all the gold and silver, the large laver which Solomon had dedicated, the brazen pillars of Boaz and Jachin, and their beautiful chapiters, and the golden tables and candlesticks, the whole composing a treasury of riches of almost inestimable value. Having secured these treasures he set fire to the Temple and royal palace and reduced them to ashes. When this destruction was complete, the Babylonians continued their depredations upon other buildings of the city, and seized all the people, among whom were the high-priests and rulers, several hundred in number. These latter were taken in chains to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar had his palace, and there publicly beheaded, but the common people were spared to become slaves to the Syrians, as Jeremiah had foretold.

Zedekiah contrived to make his escape from Jerusalem, with his family and intimate friends, by passing through a ditch, but he was overtaken and captured near Jericho, and was taken to Riblah with the other prisoners. When carried into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar he was bitterly reproached by the Babylonian king for his ingratitude, and for the crime of having broken the compact which he had made to remain loyal to Babylon, and as a punishment for his treason Nebuchadnezzar ordered that his eyes be burned out and all his sons and kinsmen slain. The blind and captive Zedekiah was then taken to Babylon, where he was kept in prison until his death, at which he was buried by Nebuchadnezzar with the magnificent honors accorded a favored king.

The destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Judah occurred four hundred and seventy years, six months and ten days after the building and dedication of the Temple, and one thousand and sixty-two years, six months and ten days after the hegira from Egypt. Josephus also estimates that from the time of the Deluge to the destruction of the Temple was one thousand, nine hundred and fifty-seven years, six months and ten days, and from the time of Adam, three thousand, five hundred and thirteen years, six months and ten days.

A remnant of Judah, the poorest in the land, was suffered to remain in their country to be wine-growers and husbandmen. Over these Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah to be ruler, but he served only a short time when Ishmael, of the seed royal, brought a party of ten adherents into Judah, and being invited to dine with Gedaliah, seized the occasion to ply the king with wine until he was drunk to unconsciousness, and then treacherously murdered him, together with all the Jews in the city.

Two days after the murder of Gedaliah eighty mourners came to do honor to the remains of their king, but seventy of these were also mercilessly massacred by Ishmael and their bodies hidden in a pit. Ten only were spared because of their pitiable supplications for mercy. Ishmael then took the

people of Mizpah, where his murders had been committed, and carried them off as captives toward Ammon, but he was pursued by a Jewish captain named Johanan, who overtook him at Gibeon and released his captives. Johanan went to Bethlehem, where he inquired of Jeremiah what Jehovah desired him to do. Ishmael had fled southward, intending to reach Egypt in order to escape a punishment from Nebuchadnezzar for murdering Gedaliah, and thither Johanan also went, but Jeremiah warned him against going to Egypt, but

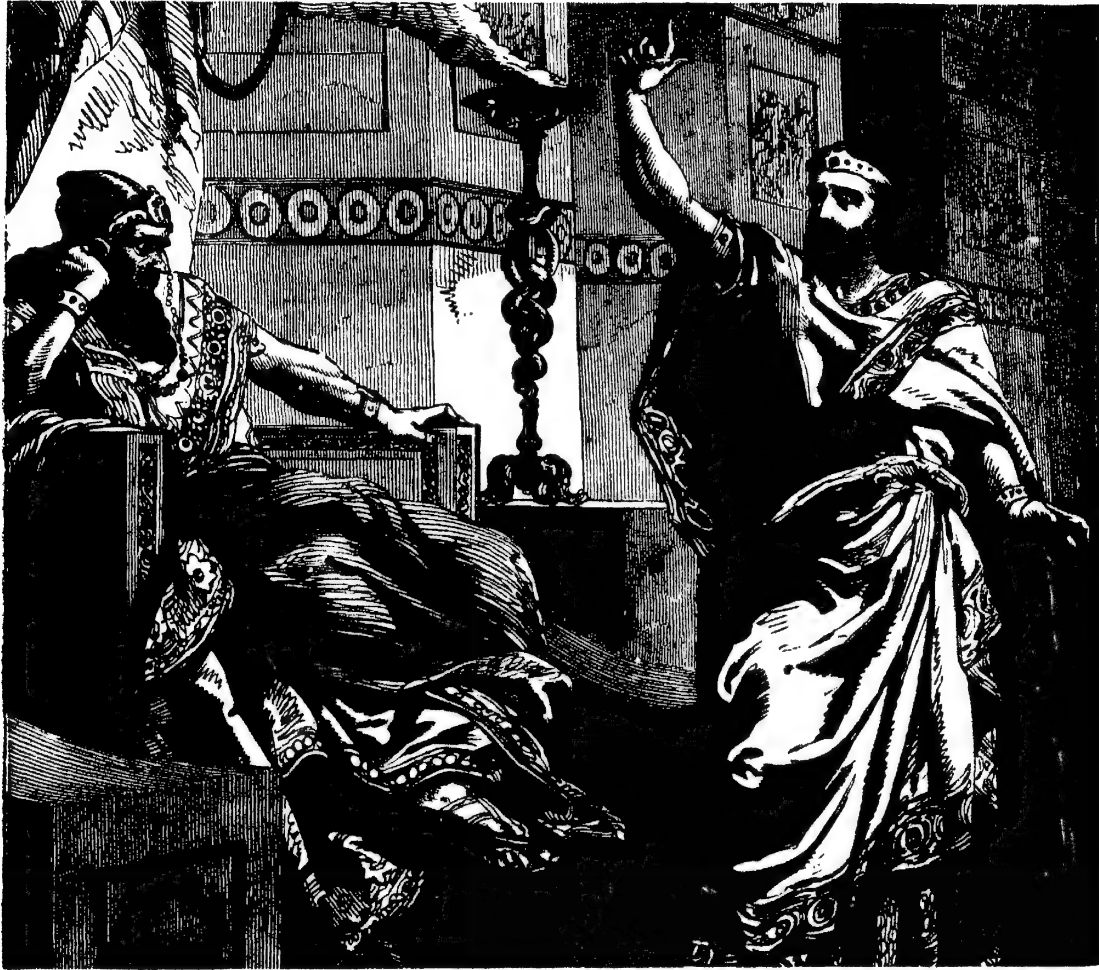


JEWS CARRIED AWAY INTO CAPTIVITY BY THE BABYLONIANS.

"And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon, where they were servants to him and his sons."—2 CHRON. xxxvi. 20.

promised him God's protection if he would remain in Judah. His warning was accompanied by a prophecy to the effect that if he went to Egypt he would be afflicted with pestilence and famine, and in the end Nebuchadnezzar would find and punish him. So far from being advised by the prophet, Johanan seized him and the scribe Baruch, and carried them with him to Egypt, and also the small remnant of Jews that had shown their loyalty to Gedaliah. A few Jews had preceded these to Egypt and formed communities

in Migdol, Noph, Pathros and Tahpanhes, where they fell into idolatry. Jeremiah threatened these with the vengeance of God and of Nebuchadnezzar, which prophecy was soon afterward fulfilled: Nebuchadnezzar made an expedition southward, but under what pretense is not recorded. He besieged Tyre, which capitulated after an heroic resistance of thirteen years, after which the victorious king led his army into Egypt, and deposing Apries, the Egyptian



DANIEL INTERPRETING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.

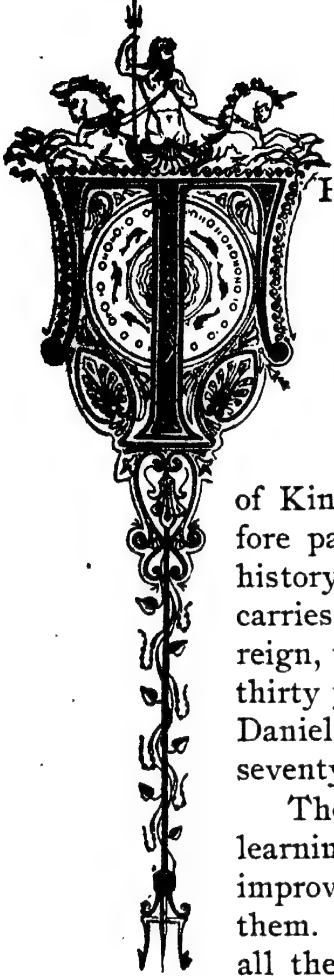
"Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation."—DAN. ii. 25.

king, set up a vassal in the person of Aniasis, thus making himself virtually ruler of the then known world. God had made Nebuchadnezzar an instrument for the final fall and complete punishment of the Israelites for their idolatry and manifold transgressions, and the fulfilment of the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The king took away all the Jews out of Egypt and carried them captives to Babylon, thus leaving Judah a waste, which it continued to be for a period of seventy years.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE JEWS BECOME ORACLES IN BABYLON.

Daniel.



I Bible record, as before explained, is not a consecutive history of the Jews, and the books of the Bible, therefore, cannot be followed, one after another, else the reader would become confused by the repetition he would find. 2 Kings is followed by Chronicles, and then by the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Ezekiel. The most of these are the repeated record of Kings, and others the writings of Solomon. We must therefore pass over these to Daniel. This latter book gives a partial history of the Jews in their Babylonish captivity, though it carries us back almost to the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, thus ante-dating some of the records already given nearly thirty years. The consecutive narrative follows with Ezra, after Daniel, which describes the return of the Israelites out of their seventy years of bondage in Babylon.

The Babylonians quickly discovered the good parts and learning of their Jewish captives, and were not long in improving their condition, as the Egyptians had done before them. Although we are told that Nebuchadnezzar put to death all the sons and kinsmen of Zedekiah, there is a manifest error either in the Scriptural account or the record as given by Josephus, for it is expressly stated by Josephus that Nebuchadnezzar "took some of the most noble of the Jews that were *children, and the kinsmen of Zedekiah*, their king, and delivered them into the hands of tutors," to be instructed in all the learning of the Chaldeans. The Bible says: "And the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel and of the king's seed, and of the princes," to be likewise instructed. The probabilities are favorable to the supposition that only a portion of Zedekiah's house was destroyed by the order of Nebuchadnezzar, a supposition rendered more probable by the fact that it was a practice common to all Jewish kings to be married to many wives, and by them to raise up a considerable number of children.

In any event, the king of Babylon gave orders that the comeliest, and those giving the best promise of easy training, be taken from among the house

of Zedekiah and put to school to be instructed in the wisdom, cunning, knowledge and science of the Chaldeans, who were reckoned as a learned people. Nebuchadnezzar also made provision for the care of these Jewish pupils by furnishing them with provisions and wine from his own table for a period of three years, at the end of which time they were expected to be worthy to "stand before the king," or to answer such questions as the king might wish to put to them. Among the number first chosen were four sons of Zedekiah, named respectively Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The names of these were changed, however, upon entering the school to the following: Daniel was called Belteshazzar; Hananiah, Shadrach; Mishael, Meshach; and Azariah, Abednego. Daniel, however, preserved his original name, for in the records of his life he is called by no other.

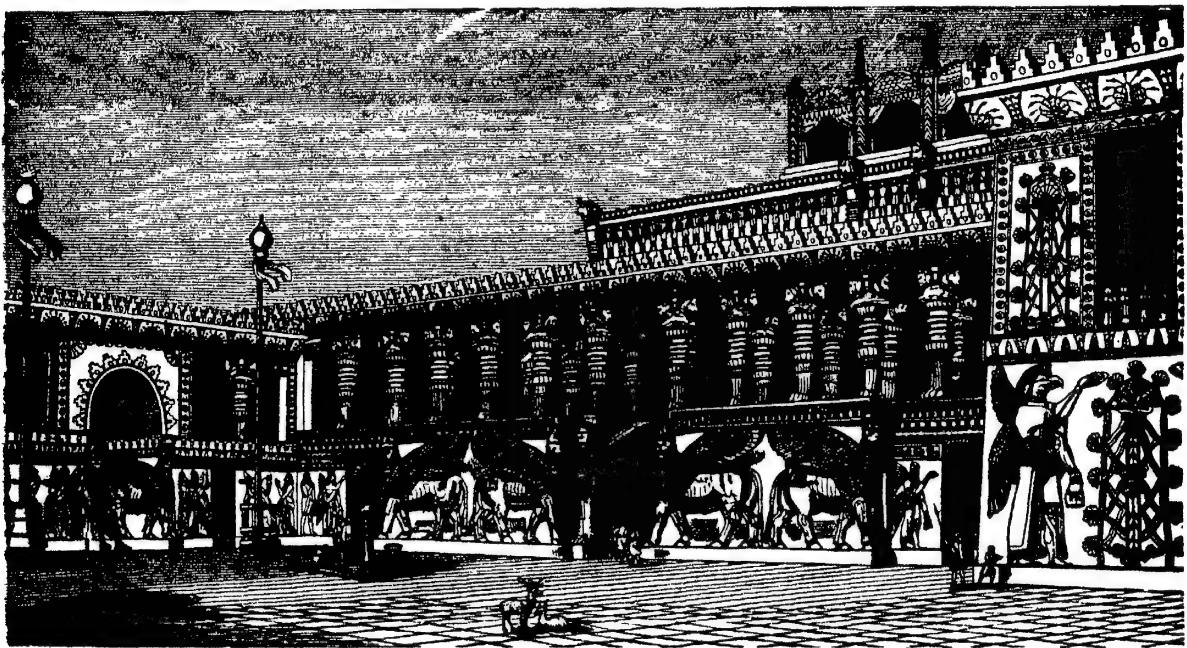
In the beginning of their instruction Daniel made a request of Ashpenaz that instead of giving himself and brethren the rich meats and other foods from the king's table, that his diet might be only pulse (which was a pottage made of meal), and dates. Ashpenaz was willing to please them, but he admonished them that such food would not serve as a sufficient nourishment and that their bodies would grow thin, which would make the king inquire why they had been improperly fed. To this Daniel replied that his purpose was to avoid a rich diet because it would make him effeminate and prevent the rapid acquisition of knowledge, a matter which proved that he was already well instructed in the effects of food upon the brain. Ashpenaz was thus persuaded to let Daniel and his brothers make a trial of ten days to discover what effect so sparse a diet would have, but at the end of that time he was surprised to see them, instead of growing thinner, much plumper, as if they had lived luxuriously.

The four made such rapid progress in their studies that at the end of three years there were none in all Babylon accounted so learned as they, for besides the wisdom they had gained at school, God had given to them the ability to interpret dreams, by which they became as oracles to all the people.

DANIEL INTERPRETS NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.

Two years after Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Egypt he had a dream which gave him great concern, for he believed that it was a portent of something which would befall himself or kingdom; but upon rising in the morning he was unable to recall to mind more than the impression it had produced. It was the custom in Assyria, as well as in Israel, Egypt, and other countries of the time, for kings to maintain magicians, soothsayers and prophets, in whose powers to foretell events and interpret dreams the most implicit confidence was placed. Therefore, when Nebuchadnezzar desired an interpretation of the vision which he had beheld in his sleep, he sent for several of the Chaldean prophets, of whom he requested an explanation of his dream. They pretended to a wisdom far beyond that which they really possessed, and told the king if he would relate

to them the particulars of his dream that they would give him a true interpretation thereof. This made Nebuchadnezzar very angry, for he said if they really were able to forecast the future they could also tell him what he had dreamed, without the necessity of any explanation from him of what his dream had been. When he found that they could afford him no satisfaction he ordered that all the so-called wise men be put to death as impostors. When Daniel heard of this harsh command of Nebuchadnezzar, and had learned the cause, he went to Arioch, captain of the king's guards, and besought him to prevail on the king to defer the execution of the men against whom his order was directed, for a single night, promising, if he would do so, to make an inquiry of God, through prayer, for an interpretation of the dream.



PALACE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR IN BABYLON.

Nebuchadnezzar, having heard what Daniel had promised, commanded his guards not to molest the magicians until he should renew his order, for he hoped that he might obtain, through the wise young Hebrew, a description and explanation of the dream that was so vexing him. Daniel and his three brothers now retired to their own house and spent the night in an earnest entreaty to God that He might reveal to them what the king had dreamed and the interpretation thereof, which request God condescended to grant out of pity for those against whom Nebuchadnezzar's anger was directed, and because of the piety of Daniel and his three righteous brothers.

On the following day, at his request, Daniel was brought before the king, by Arioch, and to him the young prophet spoke in a spirit of great humility, declaring that he did not pretend to greater wisdom than the other Chaldeans,

nor to the possession of any foreknowledge beyond that which God chose to reveal to him. He then told the king how he had prayed for that understanding which would enable him to discover his dream and to give an interpretation of it, at the same time rebuking him for his cruel order, and for requiring of his wise men that which God alone was able to perform. He then made his revelation to the king as follows:

"Wherefore, as thou in thy sleep wast solicitous concerning those that should succeed thee in the government of the whole world, God was desirous to show thee all those that should reign after thee, and to that end exhibited to thee the following dream:—Thou seemedst to see a great image standing before thee, the head of which proved to be of gold, the shoulders and arms of silver, and the belly and the thighs of brass, but the legs and the feet of iron; after which thou sawest a stone broken off from a mountain, which fell upon the image and threw it down, and brake it to pieces, and did not permit any part of it to remain whole; but the gold, the silver, the brass, and the iron became smaller than meal, which, upon the blast of a violent wind, was by force carried away, and scattered abroad; but the stone did increase to such a degree that the whole earth beneath it seemed to be filled therewith. This is the dream which thou sawest, and its interpretation is as follows:—The head of gold denotes thee, and the kings of Babylon that have been before thee; but the two hands and arms signify this, that your government shall be dissolved by two kings; but another king that shall come from the west, armed with brass, shall destroy that government; and another government, that shall be like unto iron, shall put an end to the power of the former, and shall have dominion over all the earth, on account of the nature of iron, which is stronger than that of gold, of silver, and of brass."

PREDICTIONS OF THE COMING OF CHRIST.

Continuing his interpretation and prophecy, Daniel said: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

When Nebuchadnezzar had received this revelation he bowed down before Daniel in an attitude of worship, and commanded the people to make sacrifices to him as a God. More than this, he imposed the name of his own god, Balthasar, upon him, and made him ruler over all Babylon, and appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego governors of the provinces of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed with the divine nature of Daniel that he desired to make a manifestation of his faith and belief in the true God, and at the same time elevate Daniel to a position in the hearts of his people only one degree less than that of God himself; so he ordered made a gigantic image of gold, ninety feet in height and of a breadth of nine feet, which was set up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon, and upon its dedication he commanded that at the sound of a chorus of musical instruments, every person in all his dominions should bow down and worship it, threatening those who refused with the terrible penalty of being cast into a fiery furnace.

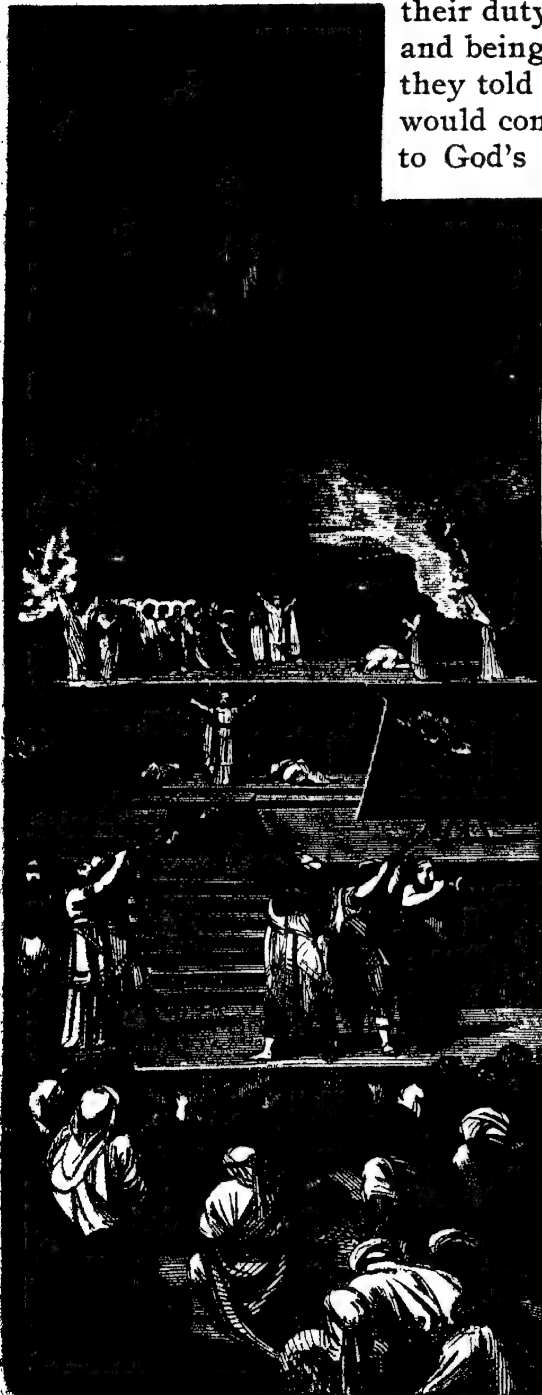
From the reading and connection we can hardly escape the belief that this image was designed to represent Daniel, and its worship was therefore the worship of Daniel, as the king had done at the time his dream was interpreted.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, though no doubt anxious to honor their brother Daniel, or to do the king's bidding when it did not conflict with their duty to God, refused to pay homage to the image, and being accused and brought before Nebuchadnezzar, they told him that not even the fear of a fiery furnace would compel them to bow down to idols in disobedience to God's law. This resistance to his commands so

angered the king that he at once gave orders to heat the furnace seven times hotter than it had ever been before, and to bind the three offenders in their coats and cast them into the flames. The heat was so intense that those who executed the king's order were destroyed by coming so near the mouth of the furnace, but Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego no sooner fell into the fiery pit than they stood up and walked about in the flames unharmed, for God had, even here, given them His protection. Nebuchadnezzar, covered with confusion and astonishment when told of the miracle, looked into the furnace and there beheld the three Hebrews and the vision of a fourth man, who bore the sign of the Son of God; so he called them by name and begged them to come to him, and thus satisfying himself of the miraculous protection which had been afforded them, he turned to worship God. He also issued a decree that any one who should thereafter speak disrespectfully of the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego should be cut into pieces and their houses be laid waste, and promoted the three righteous Hebrews to positions of greater trust in his empire.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR BECOMES INSANE FOR SEVEN YEARS.

A short time after the marvellous incident just described Nebuchadnezzar saw in his sleep another vision, and sent again to the soothsayers for an interpretation, but, though this time he repeated to them his



THE IMAGE OF GOLD SET UP FOR DANIEL.

"Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was three-score cubits."—DAN. iii. 1.

dream, none of them were able to tell to him its portent, so he called for Daniel, who came promptly and inquired of the king what his dream was, to which Nebuchadnezzar answered:

"I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw, and behold a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven. He cried aloud, and said thus: 'Hew down the tree and cut off the branches, shake off the leaves and scatter the fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump of the roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.'

"This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now then, O Belteshazzar (Baltasar of Josephus), declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation; but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee."

Upon hearing the king's dream Daniel stood for an hour without speaking, manifesting by his countenance that he was sorely troubled because he knew that the vision was of bad import, and he feared to explain its meaning lest he should give offense to the king. Upon being assured by Nebuchadnezzar that he might speak plainly and without fear, Daniel told him that the tree in its greatness represented his kingdom in its extent and power, but the Holy One sent to hew down the tree had an evil significance, for it implied that he should be driven from among men and be made to dwell with the beasts of the field, and to feed upon grass with oxen for a period of seven years. The stump of the tree that was ordered to be left indicated that his kingdom should not be taken away from him, but that he should return to rule Babylon at the end of the time appointed by God for his ostracism from among men. Daniel also exhorted him to leave off his sins, and to begin at once a course of righteousness by showing mercy to the poor.

We are not told in what particular Nebuchadnezzar was sinful, but it is probable that his great dominion and enormous wealth had inclined his heart constantly to vanity and self-glorification, amounting to a worship of power and riches, and that God had, therefore, taken His own mysterious way to humble him. This supposition is further strengthened by the events that succeeded, for a twelvemonth after the interpretation of his dream, while walking in his palace, giving voice to his own praises by declaring that it was himself alone that had built Babylon and extended its power for his own honor and glory, a voice from heaven cried out to him: "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee." In the same moment he was stricken with insanity and went out into the fields, as Daniel had foretold, and became like a beast, and there lived "till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers and his nails like bird's claws." At the end of seven years, however, the king's reason returned, and at the same time his

counsellors and officers who had administered the government in his absence sought him and brought him back to the throne again. He, therefore, acknowledged God and sang to Him praises such as these: "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth and His ways judgment; and those who walk in pride He is able to abase."

Nebuchadnezzar ruled Babylonia for forty-three years, during which time he not only conquered Judah, but Egypt as well, and made himself master of the world. Under him the Assyrian Empire grew in wealth as no other nation, perhaps, has since done. Babylon, which was built upon the spot where



ANCIENT BABYLON.

the tower of Babel was erected, from whence sprung its name, was resplendent with everything that human ingenuity could devise. Its hanging gardens and terraced slopes, as well as its magnificent palaces, great aqueducts and golden statuary, have perpetuated its fame and made the name imperishable in history. The time or manner of

Nebuchadnezzar's death is not recorded, but it is probable that he died about 560 B. C.

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son, Evil-merodach, who ruled eighteen years. The succession thereafter, as given by Smith, in his "History of the Bible," is as follows:

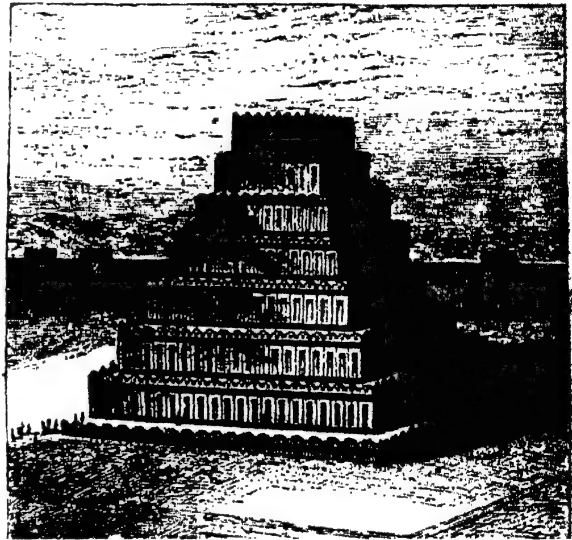
B. C.		YEARS.
559.	Neriglissar, sister's husband to Evil-merodach, a usurper; perhaps the same as Nergalsharezer, the Rab-mag (<i>Chief of the Magi?</i>) Jer. xxxix. 3, 13, (but according to Josephus, 40 years),	3½
556.	Laborosoarchod, his son, killed by a conspiracy, and the family of Nebuchadnezzar restored,	0¾
555.	Nabonadius or Nabonedus (<i>Nabu-nil</i>), the Labynetus II. of Herodotus, probably the son or grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, and the last king of Babylon,	17
539.	(About.) Belshazzar (<i>Bil-shar-uzur</i>), son of Nabonadius, becomes his associate in the kingdom, and governor of Babylon,	2
538.	Babylon taken by Cyrus, and governed by his grandfather (?) Astyages, Darius the Mede,	2
536.	Death of Darius—Cyrus reigns alone—Restoration of the Jews,	
539.	Death of Cyrus, after a reign of nine years from the taking of Babylon,	9

The book of Daniel, however, makes no mention of the rulers of Babylon between the death of Nebuchadnezzar and the accession of Belshazzar, but

proceeds directly from the record of Nebuchadnezzar's praise of God to a description of Belshazzar's feast and the fall of Babylon. The reader will not fail to note the singular coincidence of names in that of Daniel, called Balthasar, and that of Belshazzar, which is only another name for Balthasar, both being derived from the Assyrian god Bel. In this we observe another striking evidence of the reasonable supposition already noted, that Daniel had been regarded by Nebuchadnezzar as a man scarcely inferior to God, and that he sought to raise him to a position almost equal with God.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

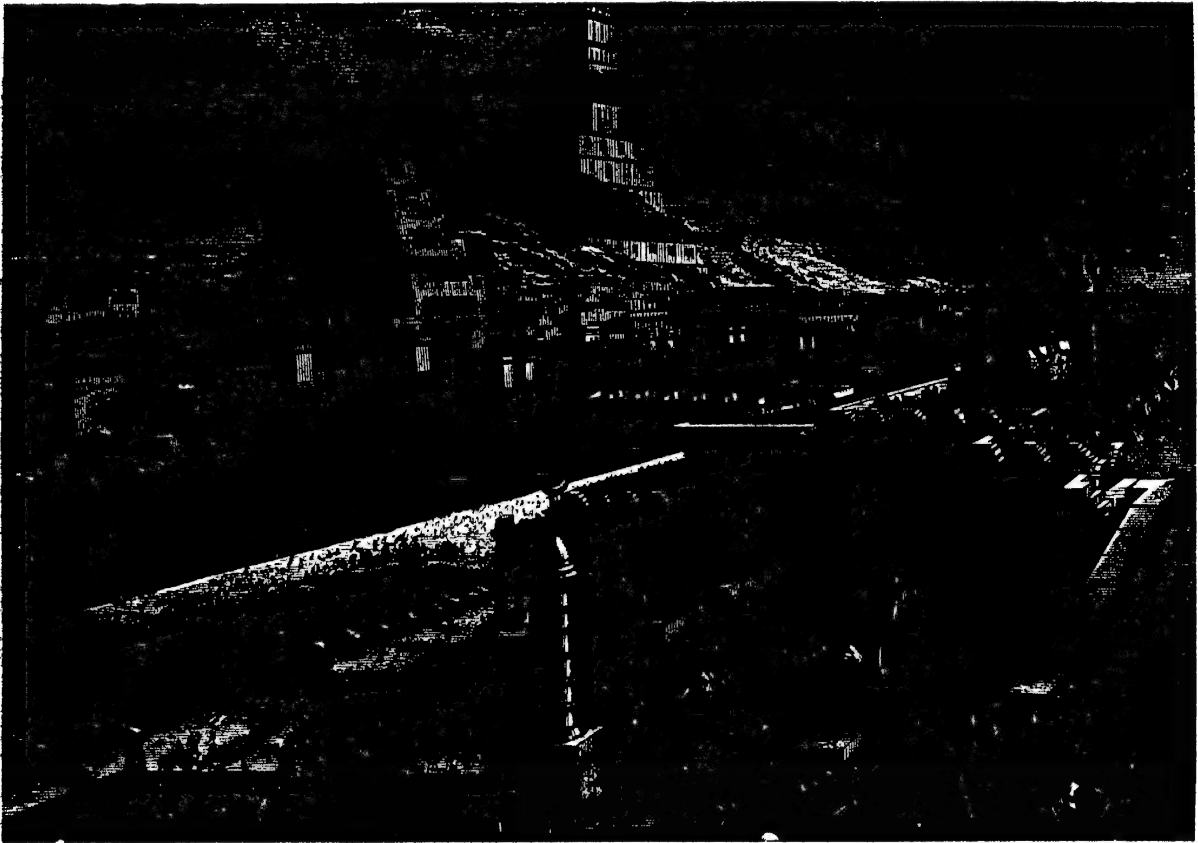
Little is written about Belshazzar's reign beyond the fact that during his rulership Babylon was besieged by Cyrus, king of Persia, and Darius, king of Media, who had formed an alliance for the destruction of the kingdom. During this great siege, memorable in history, a marvellous event occurred which brings Daniel again into prominent notice as a reader of God's signs. The king made a great feast in his sumptuous palace, which was attended by all the lords and ladies of the mighty empire. There was a mad revelry of music, songs and riotous carnival, such as an abundance of wine could only cause, during which the king commanded that all the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had captured out of the Temple in Jerusalem be brought in for the service of himself, wives, concubines and princes. The revelry now became greater, and in this hour of debauchery praises were sung to the gods of gold, silver, iron, brass, wood, and stone. The delirium of drink and passion was suddenly



TYPE OF SQUARE ASSYRIAN TEMPLE.

arrested by the appearance of a hand which moved over against the wall behind the rich candelabra, and in view of the assemblage wrote upon the plaster these ominous words, "Mene, mene, tekem, upharsin." When the king saw this strange thing he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his countenance became like that of a dead man. He called loudly for the astrologers, soothsayers and wise Chaldeans; to any one of whom who would interpret the meaning of the sign he promised the appointment of third ruler in his kingdom. When all these wise men admitted that they could not interpret the sign, Belshazzar became more gloomy than before and his depression was pitiable to see. The queen, seeing him in this condition, bade him new courage, for though his favorite soothsayers could give him no

information she assured him that there was one man in his kingdom upon whom the Spirit of God rested, for he had manifested his power in the frequent interpretations of dreams and the solving of hard questions. Such a man she declared was Daniel, and advised the king to send for him. Eager to discover what fate had been thus signified, Belshazzar sent for Daniel, and upon his coming into the king's presence he was offered many rich gifts of reward for an interpretation of the sign. These offers, however, Daniel rejected, but he told the king that he would undertake to explain to him the handwriting on the wall, though he desired first to remind him of his wickedness in profaning



CAPTURE OF BABYLON BY CYRUS.

the vessels captured from the Temple at Jerusalem, and of the punishment that had been sent upon Nebuchadnezzar for the pride and self-glory he had exhibited. These sins the king had also committed, and now God had declared the penalty which he must suffer. "This," said Daniel, "is the interpretation of the thing: *Mene*, God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. *Tekel*, Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. *Peres* (or Upharsin), Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

In accordance with his promise, the king clothed Daniel in a scarlet robe and put a chain of gold about his neck, and also made him the third ruler in

his kingdom. A fulfilment of Daniel's interpretation came speedily, for on the following night Darius and Cyrus entered the city by drawing off the Euphrates into an artificial channel and passing in by way of the dry bed. They put the inhabitants to the sword, and killed Belshazzar, by which the last posterity of Nebuchadnezzar was destroyed.

DANIEL IS CAST INTO A DEN OF LIONS.

Daniel was not only spared from slaughter, but Darius carried him to Media, and on account of his wisdom appointed him chief of three presidents over the three hundred and sixty provinces into which his kingdom was divided. The great esteem and honor in which Darius held Daniel aroused intense jealousy among the princes and those who had been candidates for the king's favors, and they sought every means to destroy him. They found him so upright in all things that it was impossible to bring any charge against him, but observing that he was given to prayers three times each day, they went to the king and persuaded him to concur with the governors in a proclamation allowing the people "a relaxation for thirty days, that no one might offer a petition or prayer, either to himself or to the gods, but that he who should transgress this decree shall be cast into a den of lions and there perish." By this order we are given to understand that in the kingdom of Darius every one was free to practise any kind of religion, or to pray to any god he might choose to worship, so that there was perfect religious tolerance. But on feast and fast days, appointed usually by the governors of the provinces, and sometimes by the king when the observance was to be general, it was common to put some restrictions upon the people. In this instance every one was commanded to abstain from all prayers or worship for a period of thirty days.

Darius had no suspicions of the conspiracy of Daniel's enemies, and accordingly promulgated the order to enforce abstinence from prayers for the time specified. Since Daniel was devoted to God's service he gave no heed to the order, but continued his prayers publicly as before, whereupon his enemies charged him before the king and demanded an enforcement of the punishment threatened for disobedience. At this Darius was very sorry, for he loved Daniel above any other man in all his kingdom, having found him steadfast in duty, honorable in all things, and one endowed with such wisdom and piety as could not be found elsewhere; but the people were resolved upon his punishment, and the king could not find any satisfying pretext for remitting the penalty. He spoke kindly to Daniel, however, and begged him not to be cast down, since God would surely be with him and protect him. So Daniel was cast into a den wherein were kept many lions that were ill-fed, so that they might the more surely and ravenously destroy such offenders as might be cast to them. The king placed his own royal seal on the rock that closed the mouth of the den, and then went away and spent the night in weeping, taking neither food nor sleep, and in the morning, when it was yet scarcely day, with anxious heart he ran to the cave to discover if his good and beloved

servant were alive. He found that the seal had not been broken, which increased his anxiety, but hastily rolling the stone away he cried out aloud, "Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" To which the king heard this joyous and triumphant answer: "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

At this Darius rejoiced in a full measure of gladness, and he helped Daniel out of the den and brought him to the palace. Having understood



DANIEL BOUND AND CAST TO THE LIONS.

"Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions."—DAN. vi. 16.

now the conspiracy that sought to destroy his favored officer and servant, he ordered that all those who had accused Daniel, together with their wives and children, be cast into the lions' den, where they were set upon by the ravenous beasts and torn to pieces almost upon the instant.

DANIEL'S PRAYER FOR THE RESTORATION OF JERUSALEM.

Although Daniel had been promoted by Darius to the highest office within his gift, and was regarded with the most affectionate appreciation and devoted attachment by the king, yet he longed for the restoration of Israel and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple that had been dedicated by Solomon.

He had not himself seen Judah in her pride, but he had read the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and knew that the seventy years of desolation were now nearly accomplished, so he betook himself to praying for the forgiveness of his people, who had transgressed the laws of Moses, and to petitioning God to restore Jerusalem and the sanctuary, wherein the people might renew their worship in their own land that was given them as an inheritance.

Morning, noon and evening was Daniel wont to pray, nor did the deferred mercy of God, from day to day, in anywise diminish his faith or abate his fervor. At length, while engaged in his devotions one evening, the angel Gabriel flew down from the throne of mercy, and presented himself before Daniel, bearing the 'glad tidings that his prayers had been heard and would soon be answered. But the angel spoke to him also as a prophet, foretelling things which should occur many years after. He promised that after seventy weeks the period of Judah's punishment would be completed and the people would be suffered to return to their desolate country and rebuild Jerusalem; that for seventy times that length of time, or nearly one hundred years, Judah should be blessed with undisturbed prosperity, after which there would come wars and dissensions. These wars, however, the angel assured Daniel, would not result in disaster to Judah, for God had determined that the people should be spared and the nation finished by the birth and glorious ministrations of the Messiah. But to this pleasant prediction he added the sorrowful prophecy of Christ's death and the second destruction of Jerusalem.

After his interview with Gabriel, Daniel beheld another vision, in the person of the blessed Messiah, whom he thus describes: "And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was beside the great river, which is Hiddekel (the Tigris); then I lifted up mine eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body was like the beryl, and His face as the appearance of lightning, and His eyes as lamps of fire, and His arms and His feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of His words like the voice of a multitude, and I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves."

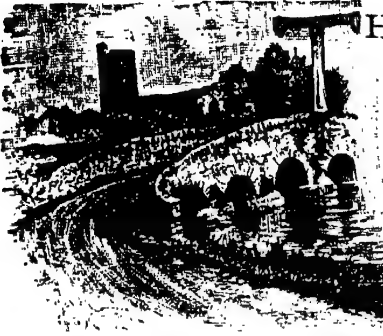
Daniel was at first overcome with fear, but the Lord spoke to him such words of encouragement that he was strengthened and prepared to hear the prophecy that was to be given. Thereupon the Messiah told him that in the years to come a league would be made between four kings who would overthrow Persia and destroy Babylon; that the country would also be invaded by the Romans, who would tyrannize over the people, but that Israel would be delivered from their hands by Michael, though it was not given to Daniel to know when these things should come to pass, his instructions being only to write them down and thus transmit the prophecy to his posterity.

Concerning Daniel's death we know nothing, for he is not mentioned in sacred history after the record of his vision of the Messiah.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RETURN OF THE JEWS FROM CAPTIVITY.

Ezra.



THE prophecies of Jeremiah are more definite than those of any other prophet, as is their fulfilment also. The captivity of Judah and destruction of Jerusalem came to pass exactly as he had foretold. It might have been possible for a shrewd observer of events, and especially for one who knew so thoroughly the weaknesses of the Jews and the strength and disposition of their neighbors, as did Jeremiah, to fore-

shadow the downfall of Judah; but to this prophecy he added another, the fulfilment of which could best conclusively prove that he spoke as the oracle of God. Nearly one hundred years before the occurrence, he foretold that Judah would be held in captivity for a period of seventy years, at the end of which time the Jews would be restored by a king named Cyrus, who would also assist them in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of the Temple. The same prophecy was given by Isaiah nearly forty years earlier, though not so explicitly. How perfectly this prediction was verified we shall soon see. As already recorded in Daniel, Belshazzar, who held the Jews captive, was overthrown by Cyrus and Darius, both of whom appreciated the wisdom of their captives even more than did Nebuchadnezzar. Gradually their liberties, or privileges, were increased, until before their manumission the Jews held many of the most important positions in the Median and Persian governments. At all times their religion was in no wise interfered with, so that, being under restraint only as regards their disposition for conquest and internal dissension, their morals became vastly improved and their worship and manner of living more in accordance with the laws of Moses. The result of this was that Cyrus and Darius were both led to embrace, in a measure at least, the worship of God, and to select Jews for their counsellors. All this prepared the way for a fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy.

In the first year of the reign of Cyrus in Babylon (about B. C. 536), that king issued a proclamation for the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, apparently, from the language used, in compliance with the prayers and request of Daniel. In this proclamation Cyrus acknowledges the God of Israel as the true God, and therefore invited the people of God throughout all his dominions to assist in the work by contributing money or other possessions. The Jews

responded to this order with great enthusiasm, for, though they now had nearly all the liberty they desired and were prosperous in the new land, still their thoughts recurred to Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon, about which they read much and were constantly reminded in all their religious observances. The work of raising funds and apportioning the labor was intrusted to those of the house of Benjamin and Judah, assisted by the Levites, as enumerated by Ezra. But Cyrus showed his zeal by restoring all the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from the Temple, and giving them into the care of a prince of Judah named Zerubbabel to be taken back to Jerusalem. Besides these gifts many other equally rich ones were contributed by neighboring countries then at peace with Cyrus, so that when all the donations were collected together, the whole represented nearly, if not quite, as much wealth as Solomon had at his command when he undertook the building.

The day of restoration was now at hand, and with the blessings of Cyrus the Hebrews started for the desolate wilderness of Judah to erect upon the ruin of their homes and cities a new empire and a Temple to be dedicated to God.

According to the account of Ezra there returned by the first caravan forty-nine thousand seven hundred and twenty-seven persons, who took with them six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses, seven hundred and thirty-six horses, four hundred and thirty-five camels, and two hundred and forty-five mules. This number did not include all the Jews that then lived in the land of their captivity, for many had become attached to Persia by possessions which they had acquired there and were therefore unable to return without sacrificing their property. Many went back to the rebuilt Jerusalem years after, while enough remained permanently in the country to form what was called the "dispersion," about which we shall read further when we come to the book of Esther.

The fifty thousand—a few less—first visited several of their desolate cities, but in the seventh month they assembled at the ruins of Jerusalem, and after observing the Feast of Tabernacles set about rebuilding the Temple. They followed the plan of Solomon in nearly every particular, though the work was carried on much more expeditiously than at the first building. In the second month the foundation was laid amid a solemn service and praise to Jehovah, the sons of Asaph repeating the chorus of David, "Because He is good, for His mercy endureth forever." The noise made by the shouters for joy was equalled by the lamentations of the old men who had beheld the first Temple and its destruction.

THE BUILDING IS HINDERED BY ARTAXERXES.

When the old adversaries of Judah heard what was being done at Jerusalem they sent up and asked permission to assist in the building of the Temple, for, said they, "We seek your God as you do, and we do sacrifice unto Him

since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assur, which brought us up hither." These people were the Samaritans, who had supplanted the Jews as already explained. Though they were a hospitable and generally a just people, they were given to idolatry and still entertained a prejudice against the Jews, which feeling was so heartily reciprocated that a Jew would perish of thirst before he would receive water from the hand of a Samaritan. On account of the prejudices, and perhaps also because they desired that the honor of rebuilding the Temple remain theirs exclusively, the Jews refused the assistance offered and returned a pert reply.

A rejection of their kind offices so incensed the Samaritans, or Cutheans, as they were also called, that they offered every impediment in their power to the work, while Cyrus was unable to afford any relief to the Jews because of wars in which he was at the time engaged. At length, upon the death of Cyrus, the Samaritans sent letters to his successor, Artaxerxes, in which they represented the Jews as a people given to quarrelling and rebellion, and declared to him if he would search their history he would discover how many seditions they had made, and how unworthy they were to be trusted to complete a work that would result in encouraging them to rebel against Persia.

Artaxerxes was influenced by these specious representations to order a suspension of work on the Temple, and for the next few months nothing was done toward the building of either Jerusalem or the Temple. Artaxerxes' rule, however, lasted only seven months, when he was dethroned—having been a usurper—by Darius II., son of Hydaspes, who came to the throne of Persia about B. C. 520. His sanction and assistance in the resumption of the work was procured by Zerubbabel, who, having been invited to a feast with the king, manifested such wisdom in making a reply to the question, "Which is greatest, wine, kings, women, or truth?" that Darius promised to grant him any wish which he might make. Thereupon Zerubbabel desired him to aid in the building of the Temple, which desire the king not only granted, but also threatened any who should thereafter interfere with the work with the severest punishment.

The work was now resumed under the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, and was finished in the sixth year of Darius' reign (B. C. 515), twenty-one years after the return of the Jews from Babylon. A feast of solemn dedication now followed, at which there were sacrificed one hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, "and for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel."

EZRA GOES TO JERUSALEM.

The dedication of the Temple was an occasion of great rejoicing, but the people were not yet free from the harassments of their neighbors, nor did they obey the laws of Moses, as the manner of their deliverance should have prompted them to do. Among the special sins charged against them at this

time was their taking wives from among strange nations, which offense was particularly forbidden by Moses. Learning of their transgressions, Ezra, who was a priest and teacher in Babylon, asked permission of Artaxerxes II., or rather of Xerxes, so well known in Grecian history, and who was king of Persia at the time, to go to Jerusalem, announcing his purpose to be to teach the Jews there their duty to God, and wherein they were disobeying the laws of Moses. Xerxes not only granted Ezra's request, but loaded him with many presents of gold and silver to be taken with him to Jerusalem as offerings to God. These presents included money with which to buy bullocks, rams and goats for the sacrifices, and also precious vessels for use in the Temple, for Xerxes had now begun to fear God, and was glad to show his sympathy for restored and reunited Israel.

As already stated, at the time of the return of the first caravan of fifty thousand Jews to Jerusalem, there were many who could not leave Babylon on account of their landed possessions, but now Xerxes provided a way for those who desired to return with Ezra, by granting them sufficient treasure to compensate them for their Persian possessions, so that a large number of these Jews went with Ezra to Judah to assist him in upholding the laws of Moses. Their journey to Jerusalem occupied four months, but though their way was through a desert beset by robbers and dangerous enemies, they accomplished the trip in safety, and delivered all the treasure brought with them into the charge of the priests and Levites of the Temple. The success of their journey prompted them to offer up sacrifices to God of twelve bullocks, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs and twelve goats, after which all that Xerxes had commanded the people to do in honoring God was given to the governors, by letters which the king had entrusted to Ezra to deliver.

Having thus prepared the way for his real mission and established himself in the confidence of the people, Ezra ordered all Judah to assemble together at Jerusalem, which command being obeyed, he told them of their disobedience, and especially rebuked them for having married with women who belonged to the neighboring heathen nations. Shechaniah, one of the chief men in Israel, was the first to acknowledge the sins which Ezra had charged against his people, and first asking forgiveness for their transgressions, proposed that all those who had so married should renounce their heathen wives and also the offspring of such marriages. This proposition found favor with all the people, including the priests and Levites as well, and a time was accordingly appointed for the rulers to hear complaints and to dissolve these objectionable marriage bonds. From this we infer that where divorces were thus made it was according to some rule of justice by which the wives were awarded a portion of the property of their husbands, for we are told that it took three months for Ezra and the elders to instruct the people what they should do in putting away their wives.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE STORY OF ESTHER.

Esther.



THE story of Esther, and how she saved her people from massacre by her beauty and strategy, is laid in the reign of Ahasuerus, called also Cyrus, B. C. 510. The Biblical account of the circumstances, though formerly discredited by many learned Hebrew scholars, is now universally accepted as an historical fact, since the proofs adduced by Dean Prideaux and Dr. Lee were put in print, who place the event in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who was the son of Ahasuerus. The account as recorded by Josephus is somewhat fuller than that contained in the Bible, and also reveals some motives which the Bible does not allude to. Dr. William Smith, one of the most profound of Bible scholars, gives the date of the incident at about 480 B. C., under the reign of Xerxes, which is the Greek name for Ahasuerus, and cites several excellent reasons in support of his claim, on which account we have chosen to allow the book of Esther to follow that of Ezra, instead of preceding it, as we would if we accepted the Biblical chronology.

In the third year of the reign of Ahasuerus, whose kingdom extended to Egypt and comprised one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, the king gave a grand feast in the banquet hall of his sumptuous palace, to which he invited all the princes and governors of Persia, which lasted for one hundred and eighty days. At the conclusion of this feast he gave another in honor of neighboring nations, which was attended by the ambassadors thereof, as well also as many of the leading men of his own kingdom. The second feast lasted seven days, and was given in a tent composed of rich linens supported by gold and silver pillars, so ample that "many ten thousands" might sit beneath it, while the cup service was of gold inlaid with precious stones. Wine was served in abundance in a laver into which the guests might dip their cups at pleasure, it being deemed offensive to have the servants offer the wine in cups continually, as was the practice among the Persians.

At the same time of Ahasuerus's second feast his beautiful wife, Vashti, the queen, also gave a banquet in the palace to a large number of her distinguished guests, no doubt the wives of those ambassadors whom the king was so royally entertaining. In the pride of his heart and the excitement produced by the large quantities of wine he had drunk, Ahasuerus described the charms

of his wife to his guests, and at length sent messengers to bring her to him that he might show her beauty to those who were feasting with him, but on account of a practice among the Persians which forbids wives to be seen by strangers, she refused to answer his summons. Several times he sent his eunuchs to her, exhorting and again commanding her to show herself to his company, but she as steadfastly refused.

However potent her reasons for refusing to show herself before the king's guests, they failed to satisfy him, and he became so irritated at her action that he asked of his counsellors how he could lawfully punish her. To this inquiry a man named Memucan responded by saying that the queen's disobedience was not only an affront to the king, but to all Persians as well, since it was an example to all wives to have regard for their husband's commands only when it appeared to them proper or their inclination prompted. The other advisers agreed with Memucan, and urged the king to punish her arrogance by divorcing her and selecting another queen in her stead. Though Ahasuerus did not deem so severe a measure in any wise unjust, yet he entertained such a great love for Vashti that it was a long time before he could be persuaded to act upon the advice of his counsellors.

When, finally, the king had determined to dethrone Vashti, he sent messengers to select and bring to him a large number of the most beautiful virgins that could be found in his dominions. Among the number who were thus chosen for the king to select a new queen from was an orphan Jewish girl named Esther, scarcely yet grown to womanhood, whose beauty surpassed even that which Vashti had possessed. Since the death of her parents she had been carefully brought up by her uncle, Mordecai, who belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and was a principal man among the Jews in Persia. When her beauty had marked her out as the one who would most likely please the king best, she was committed to the temporary care of the eunuchs, who provided her with rich raiments and costly perfumes. There had been selected four hundred virgins, all of whom underwent a purification of six months, at the end of which time they were brought before the king, one at a time, until all were examined. But scarcely had Ahasuerus's eyes fallen on Esther than he fell in love with her, and immediately proposed to make her his lawful wife; nor did he find a momentary peace until she had become his queen. The marriage was celebrated by public feasting and merry-making throughout all Persia and Media for an entire month, and he sent a request to the other nations that they also should make some observance of this glad occasion. On the day after his marriage he set a diadem upon Esther's head and made her an equal ruler with him; but so engrossed was he with his love that he never thought to inquire what was her nationality, not the least suspecting that she was a Jewess.

At the time of his wedding Ahasuerus had his palace at Shushan, and thither did Mordecai move from Babylon in order to be near his royal niece,

for he loved her as though she had been his own daughter, and desired therefore to be constantly near, to comfort her with his advice.

Some time after Mordecai's removal to Shushan he discovered, through a servant named Barnabazus, a plot that two eunuchs had made to murder the king, and forthwith acquainted Ahasuerus, through Esther, with his peril, and also told him the names of the two conspirators. The king was greatly troubled by Mordecai's revelation, but he promptly ordered the two who had plotted against his life to be hanged, and without rewarding his informant,



AHASUERUS CELEBRATING HIS MARRIAGE WITH ESTHER.

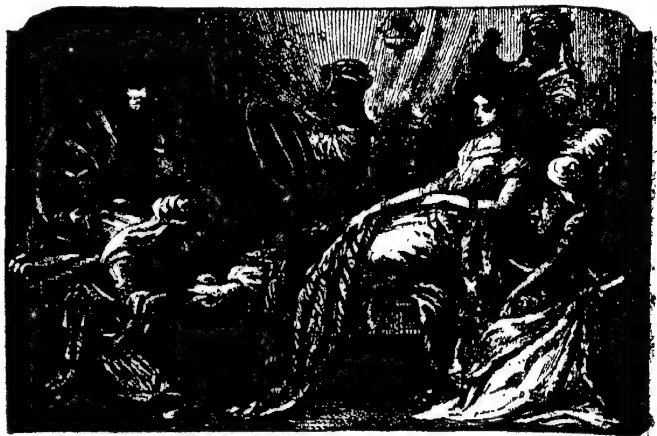
"And the king loved Esther, . . . so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen. . . . Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants."—ESTHER xi. 17, 18.

merely instructed the scribes to enter his name and deed upon the records, and bade Mordecai to remain in the palace as an intimate friend.

HAMAN INDUCES THE KING TO ORDER THE MURDER OF ALL JEWS IN PERSIA.

At this time there was an Amalekite named Haman, whom Ahasuerus so highly esteemed that he ordered all the people to pay him the most obsequious honors, as though he were a king himself. Haman lived also at the palace, and found his delight in having men bow down before him in an attitude of

reverence. All the people accorded him this honor except Mordecai, who, harboring an enmity against all Amalekites on account of their idolatry and the wars which the Israelites had with them in the establishing of Judaism, refused to pay him any regard whatever, on account of which Haman became furiously angry and resolved upon a terrible revenge, not only on Mordecai alone, but upon all the Jews that were then in Persia; for he harbored a malice against the nation because the Amalekites had been almost annihilated by the Jews, as described in previous chapters. Accordingly, he came to the king and accused them, saying: "There is a certain wicked nation, and it is dispersed over all the habitable earth that was under his dominion; a nation separate from others, unsociable, neither admitting the same sort of divine worship that others do, nor using laws like to the laws of others; at enmity with thy people, and with all men, both in their manners and practices. Now, if thou wilt be a benefactor to thy subjects, thou wilt give orders to destroy them utterly, and not leave the least remains of them, nor preserve any of them, either for slaves or for captives." But that the king might not be embarrassed by the loss of the tributes which the Jews paid him, Haman promised to give him out of his own estate forty thousand talents whensoever he pleased; and he said he would pay this money very willingly that the kingdom might be freed from such a misfortune. I quote from Josephus the following:



ESTHER PREPARING TO MEET THE KING.

"When Haman had made this petition, the king both forgave him the money and granted him the men, to do what he would with them. So Haman, having gained what he desired, sent out immediately a decree, as from the king, to all nations, the contents whereof were these:—'Ahasuerus, the great king, to the rulers of the hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia, sends this writing: Whereas I have governed many nations, and obtained the dominion of all the habitable earth, according to my desire, and have not been obliged to do any thing that is insolent or cruel to my subjects by such my power, but have shown myself mild and gentle, by taking care of their peace and good order, and have sought how they might enjoy those blessings for all time to come; and whereas I have been kindly informed by Haman, who, on account of his prudence and justice, is the first in my esteem, and in dignity, and only second to myself, for his fidelity and constant good-will to me, that there is an ill-natured nation intermixed with all mankind, that is averse to our laws, and not subject to kings, and of a different conduct of life from others, that hateth monarchy, and of a disposition that is pernicious to our affairs; I give order that these men, of whom Haman, our second father, hath informed us, be destroyed, with their wives and children, and that none of them be spared, and that none prefer pity to them before obedience to this decree; and this I will to be executed on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month of this present year, that so when all that have enmity to us are destroyed, and this in one day, we may be allowed to lead the rest of our lives in peace thereafter.' Now when this decree was brought to the cities, and to the country, all were ready for the destruction and entire abolishment of the Jews, against the day before mentioned; and they were very hasty about it at Shushan in particular. Accordingly, the king and Haman spent their time in feasting together with good cheer and wine; but the city was in disorder.

"Now, when Mordecai was informed of what was done, he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth, and sprinkled ashes upon his head, and went about the city, crying out that 'a nation which had been injurious to no man, was to be destroyed.' And he went on saying thus as far as to the king's palace, and there he stood, for it was not lawful for him to go into it in that habit. The same thing was done by all the Jews that were in the several cities wherein this decree was published, with lamentation and mourning, on account of the calamities denounced against them. But as soon as certain persons had told the queen that Mordecai stood before the court in a mourning habit, she was disturbed at this report, and sent out such as should change his garments; but when he could not be induced to put off his sackcloth, because the sad occasion that forced him to put it on was not yet ceased, she called the eunuch Acraheus, for he was then present, and sent him to Mordecai, in order to know of him what sad accident had befallen him, for which he was in mourning, and would not put off the habit he had put on, at her desire. Then did Mordecai inform the eunuch of the occasion of his mourning, and of the decree which was sent by the king into all the country, and of the promise of money whereby Haman bought the destruction of their nation. He also gave him a copy of what was proclaimed at Shushan, to be carried to Esther; and he charged her to petition the king about this matter, and not

to think it a dishonorable thing in her to put on an humble habit for the safety of her nation, wherein she might deprecate the ruin of the Jews, who were in danger of it; for that Haman, whose dignity was only inferior to that of the king, had accused the Jews, and had irritated the king against them. When she was informed of this, she sent to Mordecai again, and told him that she was not called by the king, and that he who goes into him without being called, is to be slain, unless when he is willing to save any one, he holds out his golden sceptre to him; but that to whomsoever he does so, although he go in without being called, that person is so far from being slain, that he obtains pardon, and is entirely preserved. Now when the eunuch carried this message from Esther to Mordecai, he bade him also tell her that she must not only provide for her own safety, but for the common preservation of her nation, for if she now neglected this opportunity, there would certainly arise help to them from God some other way; but she and her house would be destroyed by those whom she now despised. Hearing

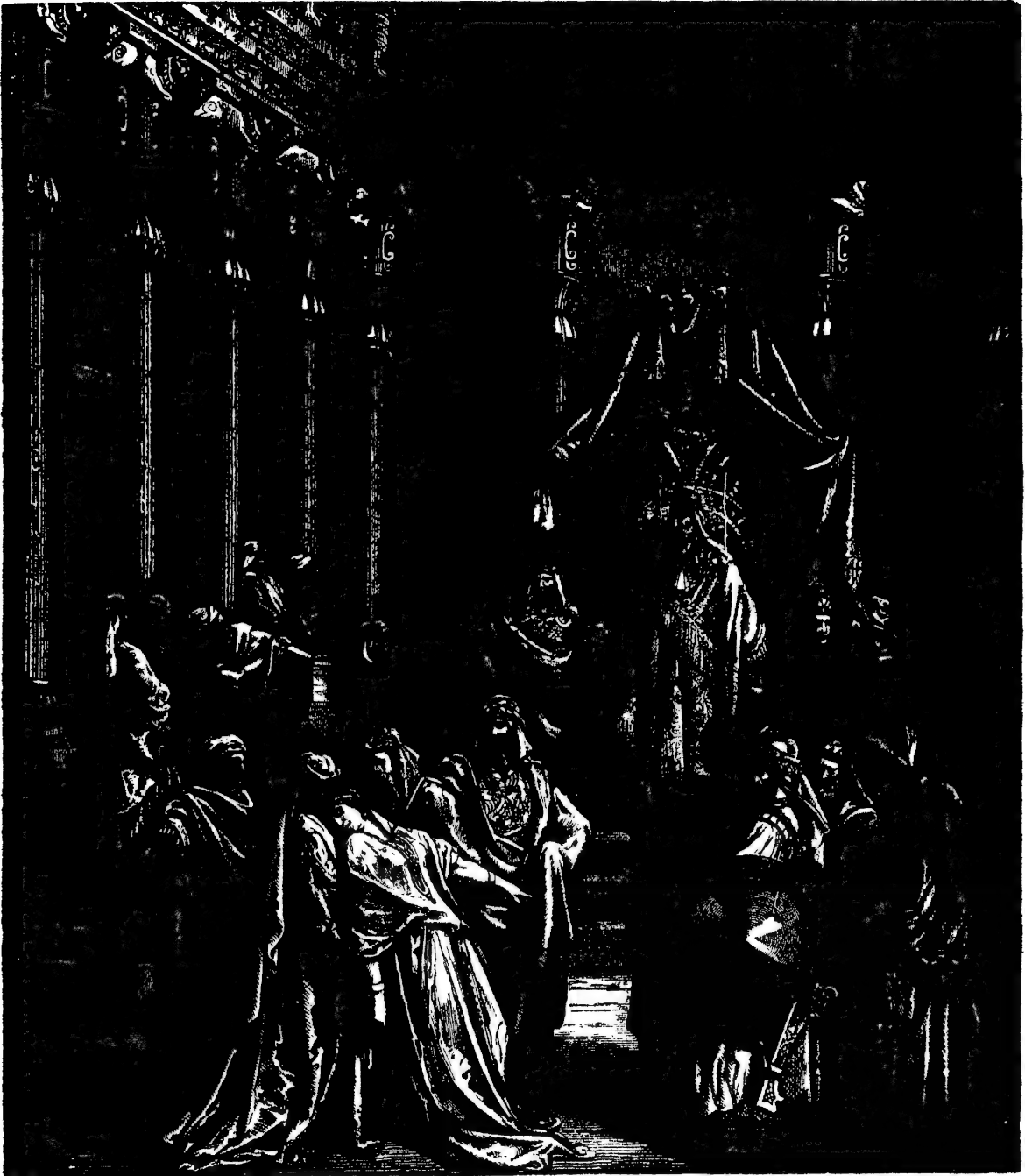


AHASUERUS RECEIVING ESTHER.

this, and following her own inclination as well, she sent back word to Mordecai by the same messenger, instructing him to call all the Jews in Shushan together and enjoin them to hold a fast, and that she and her maidens would observe the same, and promised that during the fast she would go before the king, even though it was against the law, and petition him to revoke Haman's cruel order."

The law to which Esther refers was one peculiar to Ahasuerus's reign, or at least there is no mention of its existence either before or after him. The king was surrounded with a body-guard, armed with axes, who had orders to chop down any one who should dare to approach to the royal presence or venture to make a request without first receiving the king's sanction. The privilege of addressing the throne was indicated by the king extending his golden sceptre toward the person who might win his favor by appearances, but to attempt an audience was like tempting death, for the king's moods were variable and his mercy equally so.

Mordecai obeyed the instructions of Esther, and having assembled the Jews in a congregation, fasted for three days and offered up earnest entreaties to



ESTHER SWOONS BEFORE THE KING.

God to deliver the Israelites from the calamity which was threatened. Esther also prayed with equal fervor, after the custom of the Persians, by clothing

herself in mourning garments and casting herself upon the ground, and besought God to make her more beautiful in the eyes of the king that her words might be more persuasive in averting his anger. After thus praying for three days she put off her mourning clothes and dressed herself in the rich raiment she wore as a queen, and taking two of her maidens to support her, she went to the king more radiantly beautiful than she had ever appeared before. Possibly expecting to receive some pleasant salutation, she was therefore the more surprised and affrighted when she saw his countenance lighted up with anger, as if he were disposed to order his guard to kill her in his presence. The poor queen, anxious for her own life, and equally concerned for the lives of her people, was so overcome with fear that her knees trembled until she fell sideways to the floor in a swoon as one dead. At this the king was terrified, and leaping from his throne he laid aside his royalty for the manhood that nature had aroused, and taking her in his arms called back with words of passionate endearment the life that had been almost destroyed by the spectre of fear. Holding her still in his embrace he bade her to dismiss her alarm, for the law which denied subjects the right to come into his presence unbidden did not apply to the queen, whose power was equal to his own. He then put the sceptre into her hand as a sign of her equality in the rulership, and declared that whatever request she made should be granted, even to the half of his kingdom.

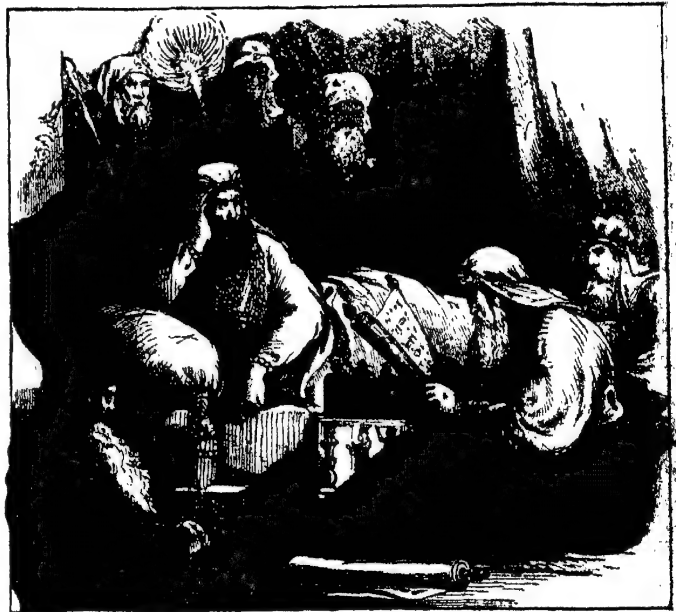
When Esther had somewhat regained her composure she smiled sweetly upon the king and said that the only request she now had to make was that he and Haman should come and sup with her presently. When the king and Haman had come to feast with her and were drinking in her honor, Ahasuerus, who was anxious to discover what request the queen would make of him, besought her to withhold nothing from him and to ask freely what she desired. But Esther replied that she was not yet ready to make her desire known, but she promised that if, on the morrow, the king and Haman would again come and sup with her, she would tell him what was her petition.

This second invitation elated Haman so much that he went home and among those whom he met he vaunted himself by declaring that he alone, besides the king, was honored by a request to eat with the queen, who thus had manifested her great esteem for him. Though delighted with this honor and preference, Haman was uneasy, being consumed with a jealousy against Mordecai, whom he daily saw enjoying the liberties of the king's court, while the "proud Jew," as he called him, refused to pay him any respect. He spoke to his wife, Zeresh, of how obnoxious Mordecai was to him, whereupon she advised him, according to Josephus:

"To give order that a gallows should be made fifty cubits high, and that in the morning he should ask it of the king that Mordecai might be hanged thereon. So he commended her advice, and gave order to his servants to prepare the gallows, and to place it in the court, for the punishment of Mordecai thereon, which was accordingly prepared. But God laughed to scorn the wicked expectations of Haman; and as He knew what the event would be, He was delighted at it, for that night He took away the king's sleep: and

as the king was not willing to lose the time of his lying awake, but to spend it in something that might be of advantage to his kingdom, he commanded the scribe to bring him the chronicles of the former kings, and the records of his own actions; and when he had brought them, and was reading them, one was found to have received a country on account of his excellent management on a certain occasion, and the name of the country was set down; another was found to have had a present made him on account of his fidelity; then the scribe came to Bigthan and Teresh, the eunuchs that had made a conspiracy against the king, which Mordecai had discovered; and when the scribe said no more but that, and was going on to another history, the king stopped him, and inquired, 'whether it was not added that Mordecai had a reward given him?' and when he said there was no such addition, he bade him leave off; and he inquired of those that were appointed for that purpose, what hour of the night it was; and when he was informed that it was already day, he gave order that, if they found any one of his friends already come, and standing before the court, they should tell him. Now, it happened that Haman was found there, for he was come sooner than ordinary, to petition the king to have Mordecai put to death; and when the servants said, that Haman was before the court, he bade them call him in; and when he was come in, he said: 'Because I know that thou art my only fast friend, I desire thee to give me advice how I may honor one that I greatly love, and that after a manner suitable to my magnificence.' Now Haman reasoned with himself, that what opinion he should give it would be for himself, since it was he alone who was beloved by the king; so he gave that advice which he thought of all others the best; for he said: 'If thou wouldst truly honor

a man whom thou sayest thou dost love, give order that he may ride on horseback, with the same garment which thou wearest, and with a gold chain about his neck, and let one of thy intimate friends go before him, and proclaim through the whole city, that whomsoever the king honoreth obtaineth this mark of his honor.' This was the advice which Haman gave, out of a supposal that such reward would come to himself. Hereupon the king was pleased with the advice, and said: 'Go thou, therefore, for thou hast the horse, the garment, and the chain, ask for Mordecai the Jew, and give him those things, and go before his horse and proclaim accordingly; for thou art,' said he, 'my intimate friend, and hast given me good advice; be thou then the minister of what thou hast advised me to. This shall be his reward from us for preserving my life.' When he heard this order, which was entirely unexpected, he was confounded in his mind, and knew not what to do. However, he went out and led the horse, and took the purple garment, and the golden chain for the neck, and finding Mordecai before the court, clothed in sackcloth, he bade him put that garment off, and put



THE SCRIBES READING THE LAW TO AHASUERUS.

the purple garment on; but Mordecai, not knowing the truth of the matter, but thinking that it was done in mockery, said: 'O thou wretch, the vilest of all mankind, dost thou thus laugh at our calamities?' But when he was satisfied that the king bestowed this honor upon him, for the deliverance he had procured him when he convicted the eunuchs who had conspired against him, he put on that purple garment which the king always wore, and put the chain about his neck, and got on horseback, and went round the city, while Haman went before, and proclaimed: 'This shall be the reward which the king will bestow on every one whom he loves, and esteems worthy of honor.' And when they had gone round the city, Mordecai went in to the king: but Haman went home, out of shame, and informed his wife and friends of what had happened, and this with tears: who said, that he never would be able to be revenged of Mordecai, for that God was with him.

"Now while these men were thus talking one to another, Esther's eunuchs hastened Haman away to come to supper; but one of the eunuchs named Sabuchadas saw the gallows that was fixed in Haman's house, and inquired of one of his servants for what purpose they had prepared it. So he knew that it was for the queen's uncle, because Haman was about to petition the king that he might be punished; but at present he held his peace. Now when the king, with Haman, were at the banquet, he desired the queen to tell him what gifts she desired to obtain, and assured her that she should have whatsoever she had a mind to. She then lamented the danger her people were in; and said, that 'she and her nation



HAMAN LEADING MORDECAI THROUGH THE STREETS.

"Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor."—ESTHER vi. 9.

were given up to be destroyed, and that she, on that account, made this her petition: that she would not have troubled him if he had only given order that they should be sold into bitter servitude, for such a misfortune would not have been intolerable; but she desired that they might be delivered from destruction."

When the king had heard Esther's complaint he inquired of her who was the author of this conspiracy against the Jews, for though he had given Haman authority to issue a proclamation to destroy them, he now saw that he was about to be made the instrument of some wicked design, which he became anxious to discover. To this inquiry Esther replied by exposing to him all the iniquities of Haman in the presence of Haman himself. Without giving any intimation, at the time, of his disposition, the king went out into the garden to meditate upon what he should do. The moment that Ahasuerus left the room Haman fell down before the queen and implored her mercy for the iniquity he had designed, and remained beseeching her pardon and influence until the king returned, when, seeing the suppliant bowed upon his wife's bed, and the queen full of anger, he determined to visit upon Haman a punishment equal to his great crime. At this moment one of the servants came to call Haman to supper, and to notify him that the gallows prepared for Mordecai was now ready. This information decided the king in his intention to punish Haman, for he immediately ordered that the offender be hanged upon the gallows, and that his estate be confiscated and given to Esther, who directly after granted it to Mordecai, whom she now acknowledged to the king was her uncle.

HOW THE DECREE OF HAMAN WAS NULLIFIED.

By this action of the king the wicked Haman was justly punished and Mordecai saved, but the proclamation which gave the right to the people to slay the Jews at the time appointed and confiscate their estates was still prospectively in force, and the day was fast approaching for its fulfilment. Esther therefore prayed and besought the king to spare the Jews from slaughter, declaring that if her countrymen were destroyed she could not bear to live herself any longer.

The king was greatly troubled by Esther's entreaties, because while he was anxious to save the Jews, he knew not how to contrive a means for recalling the proclamation of Haman, since it was a principle among the Persians and Medes that the decrees issued by those in authority, in either government, were irrevocable even by the king himself. After much reflection, and a meeting with his counsellors for their advice, Ahasuerus, at length, probably with the help of God, discovered a way of nullifying the proclamation. To carry into effect his plan for saving the Jews, he called his scribes and had them hastily write a new proclamation at the dictation of Esther, but which he signed with his own seal. This new decree recounted the conspiracy of Haman and the crimes for which he had been hanged, and called upon the people to treat the Jews with that kindly consideration which their merits deserved; at the same time the proclamation of Haman was permitted to stand, the king denying



HAMAN. BEGGING FOR HIS LIFE.

himself the right to revoke it, but to render it less effectual he gave the Jews permission to arm themselves and to fight any who might attempt to molest them; more than this, he encouraged them in every way to repel their enemies and declared that God would be with them in their battles. This order was sent by messengers to every town within the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in Persia, so that the Jews were given timely notice and held themselves in readiness for the day appointed for their destruction.

As a sign of the king's favor to all the Jews, Mordecai was clothed in royal raiment and a crown of gold was placed upon his head, in which array he rode at the head of a public procession to reassure his people. At this sight many of the Persians became stricken with fear that the Jews would turn on them to revenge themselves for the proclamation of Haman, nor were their fears without good reason, for when the fatal thirteenth day arrived the Jews slew five hundred Amalekites in Shushan, and on the following day, with the king's permission by Esther's request, they hanged the ten sons of Haman, and killed three hundred more of their enemies. The same vengeance was manifested by the Jews in all the provinces, where altogether no less than seventy-five thousand Amalekites were slain. This action of the Jews was a fulfilment of Balaam's prophecy, as given in Numbers xxiv. 20: "Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be, that he perish forever."

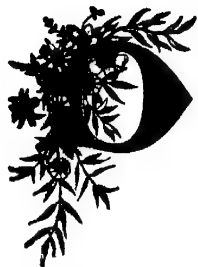
After the destruction of the Amalekites, Mordecai wrote to all the Jews in the kingdom of Persia, ordering them to observe the victory, and their deliverance by a public feast, and also exhorted them to make a similar observance on the thirteenth and fourteenth days of the twelfth month of each year thereafter, which observance was to be called the Feast of Purim. Mordecai lived many years after this event, and became the most illustrious Jew in Persia, and did more than any other man of his nation in consolidating the power of his people.

It is a singular fact that the name of God does not once appear in the book of Esther, on which account, as before mentioned, many learned Biblical scholars have doubted its authenticity, though others equally well versed in Hebrew history accept it as canonical.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NEHEMIAH OBTAINS PERMISSION TO REBUILD JERUSALEM.

Nehemiah.



URING the time of Mordecai's triumph and of the events just described, affairs in Jerusalem had come to a sad condition. The Temple was completed and in it the Jews made their sacrifices, but they had not kept the commands of Moses, so that their measure of prosperity was small. We have already explained how Ezra was sent to rebuke them, and how successful had been his mission ; but even Ezra did not encourage the people in anything save their religious duty, apparently being unconcerned as to their commercial growth, or the dangers to which they were subject from hostile neighbors. Matters had, indeed, become worse for the Jews than at any time since their captivity. The walls of the city had not been repaired, and the citizens were exposed to attacks, and they seemed to have lost heart generally. Says Josephus :

"Now there was one of those Jews who had been carried captive, who was cup-bearer to King Xerxes ; his name was Nehemiah, who belonged to the tribe of Judah. As this man was walking before Susa, the metropolis of the Persians, he heard some strangers, that were entering the city, after a long journey, speaking to one another in the Hebrew tongue ; so he went to them and asked from whence they came ; and when their answer was, that they came from Judea, he began to inquire of them again in what state the multitude was, and in what condition Jerusalem was : and when they replied that they were in a bad state, for that their walls were thrown down to the ground, and that the neighboring nations did a great deal of mischief to the Jews, while in the day-time they overran the country, and pillaged it, and in the night did them mischief, insomuch that not a few were led away captive out of the country, and out of Jerusalem itself, and that the roads were in the day-time found full of dead men. Hereupon Nehemiah shed tears, out of commiseration for the calamities of his countrymen, and looking up to heaven he said, 'How long, O Lord, wilt thou overlook our nation, while it suffers so great miseries, and while we are made the prey and the spoil of all men ?' And while he staid at the gate, and lamented thus, one told him that the king was going to sit down to supper ; so he made haste and went as he was, without washing himself, to minister to the king in his office of cup-bearer : but as the king was very pleasant after supper, and more cheerful than usual, he cast his eyes on Nehemiah, and seeing him look sad, he asked him why he was sad. Whereupon he prayed to God to give him favor, and afford him the power of persuading by his words ; and said, 'How can I, O king, appear otherwise than thus, and not be in trouble, while I hear that the walls of Jerusalem, the city where are the sepulchres of my fathers, are thrown down to the ground, and that its gates are consumed by fire ? But do thou grant me the favor to go and build its walls, and to finish the building of the Temple.' Accordingly the king gave him a signal, that he freely granted him what he asked ; and told him that he should carry an epistle to the governors, that they might pay him due honor, and afford him whatsoever assistance he wanted, and as he pleased. 'Leave off thy sorrow then,' said the king, 'and be cheerful in the performance of th' office hereafter.' So Nehemiah worshipped God and gave the king thanks for his promise, and cleared up his sad and cloudy countenance, by the pleasure he had from the king's promises. Accordingly, the king called for him the next day, and gave him an epistle to be carried to Adeus, the governor of Syria, and Phœnicia, and Samaria ; wherein he sent to him to pay due honor to Nehemiah, and to supply him with what he wanted for his building.

"Now, when he was come to Babylon, and had taken with him many of his countrymen, who voluntarily followed him, he came to Jerusalem in the twenty and fifth year of the reign of Xerxes ; and when he had shown the epistles to God, he gave them to Adeus, and to the other governors. He also called together all the people to Jerusalem, and stood in the midst of the temple, and made the following speech to them : 'You know, O Jews, that God hath kept our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in mind continually ; and for the sake of their

righteousness, hath not left off the care of you. Indeed he hath assisted me in gaining this authority of the king to raise up our wall, and finish what is wanting of the Temple. I desire you, therefore, who well know the ill-will our neighboring nations bear to us, and that when once they are made sensible that we are in earnest about building, they will come upon us, and contrive many ways of obstructing our works, that you will in the first place, put your trust in God, as in Him that will assist us against their hatred, and to intermit building neither night nor day, but to use all diligence, and to hasten on the work, now we have this especial opportunity for it.' When he had said this, he gave order. that rulers should measure the wall, and part the work of it among the people, according to their villages and cities, as every one's abilities should require. And when he had added this promise, that he himself, with his servants, would assist them, he dissolved the assembly. So the Jews prepared for the work : that is the name they are called by from the day that they came up from Babylon, which is taken from the tribe of Judah, which came first to these places, and thence both they and the country gained that appellation."

But when the Ammonites and Moabites heard of the resolution of the Jews they formed a conspiracy with the view of attacking and destroying them before the walls could be completed. Fortunately, though the plot was conceived in the city of Ashdod, some Jews living there discovered the plans that had been made and hastened to Jerusalem to apprise their brethren of the danger that threatened, and thus gave them timely notice to prepare a defense. Nehemiah was in no wise discouraged by the evil reports that came to him, but took the precaution to give orders to all those engaged in building the walls to keep well in rank and have their armor on while at work, that they might not be taken unaware. The mason and the hod-carrier alike wore their swords constantly, while shields were deposited at a place near at hand where they could be instantly grasped. In addition to these measures of safety Nehemiah placed trumpeters five hundred feet apart round the city, with instructions to give warning of the approach of any enemy. Nehemiah gave much of his own time to encouraging the builders and to watching for signs of danger, his custom being to walk round the city several times each night.

In addition to the great responsibilities which rested upon Nehemiah as superintendent of the builders, he assumed others of a yet more trying order, which was no less than a reformation of several abuses that had much to do with making the people so indifferent to their condition before Nehemiah came to Jerusalem. The Jews were required to pay such large tributes to Ahasuerus that a large majority were reduced to such poverty that they were scarcely above the condition of slaves. Their possessions were mortgaged for money borrowed at usurious rates of interest, and those who were unable to meet their burdensome obligations were punished in many cruel ways, not the least of which was the enslavement of the children of the unfortunate debtors. To reform these terrible abuses that were destroying the ambition of the people, Nehemiah called a solemn assembly of all those in Jerusalem. At this meeting he excoriated the usurers, and so shamed them of their practices that he induced them to release the possessions of their debtors and to lend their aid to the building of a city to be dedicated to God. He also set an example to them of his own earnestness and loyalty to the interests of all alike by maintaining at his own table one hundred and fifty poor Jews, and gave with generous hand to those found in distress and to those who returned in poverty from Persia.

The success and liberality of Nehemiah, however, brought him poor reward, for as the walls rose day after day and the breaches were repaired, a party of the nobles in Judah, under the instigation of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, formed a conspiracy to bring Nehemiah to the king under a charge of treason. At four several times they sent out open letters, so that all might read them, wherein they gave currency to concocted reports that the Jews had resolved to rebel against Ahasuerus, and were fortifying the city preparatory to declaring Nehemiah king. They also charged him with encouraging certain prophets to preach and proclaim, "There is a king in Judah." But to all of these attacks Nehemiah contented himself with making no other answer than a denial, and an appeal to God for judgment upon his motives, which was sufficient to retain him in the confidence of the king.

CELEBRATING THE RESTORATION OF JERUSALEM.

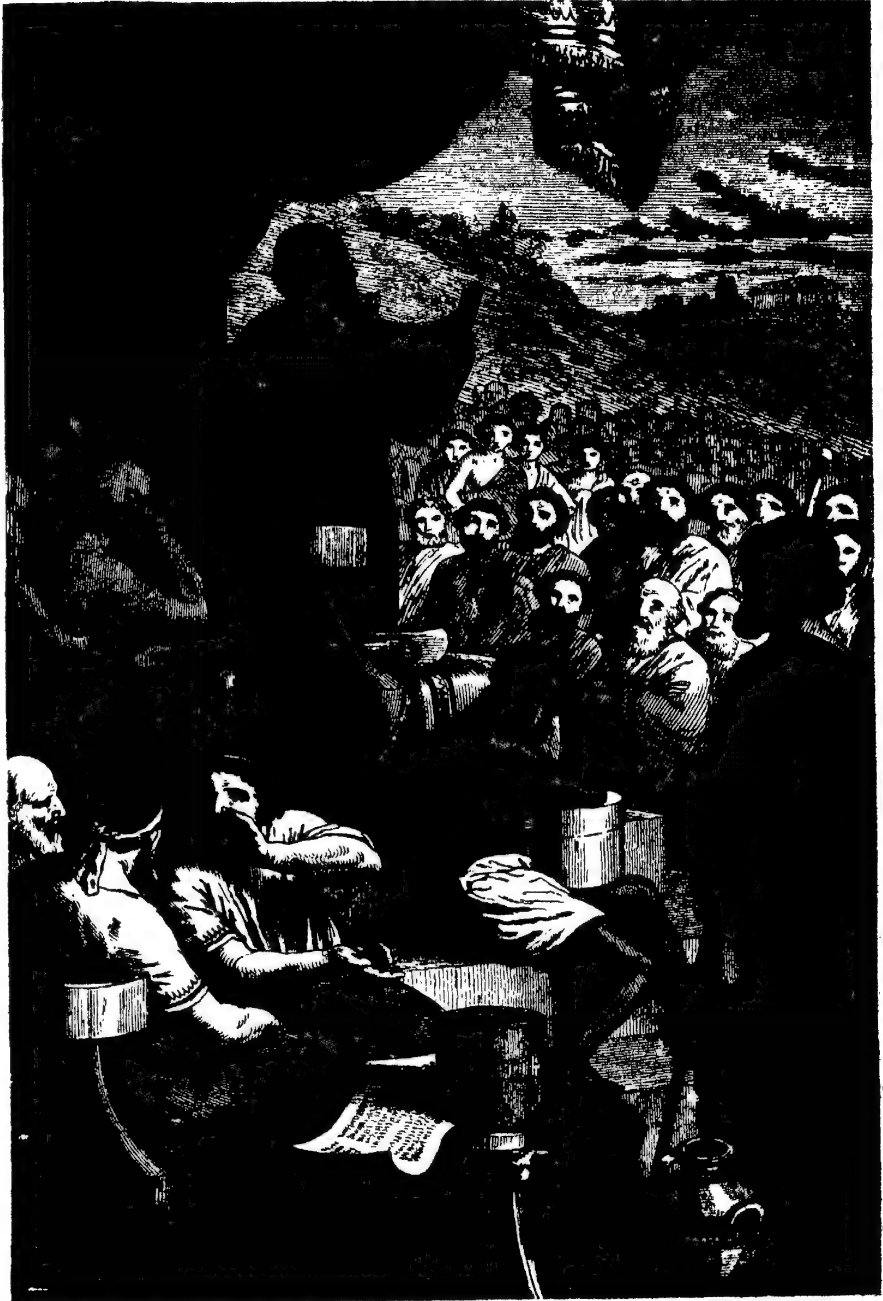
The walls of Jerusalem were finished at last, after two years and four months of diligent work, in the twenty-eighth year of Ahasuerus's reign, and the completion was celebrated by a grand feast which lasted eight days. But there was much yet to be done. The walls were finished, it is true, but there were comparatively few houses, and the building of these to accommodate the people was the next necessary thing to be done.

On the second month after the walls were completed there was celebrated "the year of release," which was the inauguration of the people in their new life in restored Jerusalem. On the first day of this public observance Ezra appeared before the people and read to them the *Book of the Law*, assisted by six scribes on his right hand and seven Levites on his left.

"The reading produced an impression like that made on Josiah. All the people wept at what they heard; not only, we may well believe, with regret at the past glories of their nation, but at the recital of the sins for which that glory had departed, not unmixed with a penitent consciousness of their own guilt. But Nehemiah (who is now first mentioned in the transaction), supported by Ezra and the Levites, bade them cease their sorrow, and go home to 'eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing was prepared, for the day was holy to Jehovah.' The people went away to make great mirth, because they understood the words that were declared unto them. When the reading was resumed on the following day, they came to the institution of the Feast of Tabernacles in this very month of Tisri. Their excited minds caught the signal for fresh rejoicing in Jehovah. They went forth into the mount to fetch branches of olive, and pine, and myrtle, and palm, and thick trees, and made booths on the roofs and in the courts of their houses, and in the Temple court and along the streets to the city gates. Such a Feast of Tabernacles had not been kept since the days of Joshua. The reading of the law was continued for all the seven days of the feast, and the eighth was a solemn assembly, as Moses had commanded."

After a large number of houses had been built in Jerusalem, Nehemiah sent word to all the priests and Levites throughout Judah to come and make their homes in the city, and ordered those engaged in agricultural pursuits to bring a tithe of their productions each year to Jerusalem to maintain the public worship. By these means the city was soon filled with a larger population than it had at the time of its capture by Nebuchadnezzar. From the language of Nehemiah it would appear that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were exclusively of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, while those of the other ten tribes were assigned to the cities of Judah, but just what cities we are not told.

There was also another celebration held after the settlement of the two tribes in Jerusalem, at which the walls of the city were dedicated by solemn ceremonies. "The priests and Levites, called together from all the cities of Judah, purified the walls and the people. The rulers were divided into two parts, which went round the walls in procession to the right and to the left, the one headed by Ezra and the other by



EZRA READING THE BOOK OF THE LAW.

Nehemiah, each with his train of priests and Levites, blowing the trumpets and singing thanks to God. The day was crowned with great sacrifices, and their shouts of joy sounded from the rock of Zion far and wide over the hills of Judah. The only remaining records of Nehemiah's twelve years' government relate to the provisions made for the priests and Levites and singers, and the separation of the Ammonites and Moabites from the congregation, according to the sentence pronounced on them by Moses—another indication of the reorganization of the Church of Jehovah."

Nehemiah remained in Jerusalem nearly seven years, and then returned to the Persian court, but some time afterward he again visited Jerusalem, having been called to reform abuses that had grown up under the princes. He found Tobiah, an enemy, occupying a room in the Temple, which had been set apart for the sacred vessels and tithes, all of which were removed to make room for the household effects of the new occupant. The effect of this was to drive away the Levites, who, being defrauded of their tithes, had abandoned the Temple and gone into other cities. Nehemiah threw out the furniture of Tobiah, returned to their proper places the sacred vessels, meat-offerings, frankincense, etc., and then recalled the Levites and established them in their offices again. The people had also fallen into a profanation of the Sabbath by engaging in their usual occupations on that day, and giving no attention to worship or the observance of the Mosaic laws. This Nehemiah corrected by ordering the gates of Jerusalem shut from Saturday night until the close of the Sabbath, and appointed guards to enforce a strict compliance with the law. His third reform dealt with the mixed marriages, against which Ezra had previously promulgated his decree. The Jews had married among the Ammonites and Moabites, and the effect could hardly have been otherwise than to lead them into idolatry. Nehemiah repeated the law of Moses again to the people and induced them, as Ezra had done, to divorce their heathen wives and thereafter abide by the command that enjoined them from taking women from among strange nations.

The end of Nehemiah's life is not recorded in the Bible, his history concluding with a description of the reforms he accomplished in Judah, and of his curses upon those who had defiled the priesthood. The last exclamation he is credited with making is as follows: "Remember me, O my God, for good," which might have been appropriate as his dying words, yet of his death nothing is written. He was the last of the prophets, and hence called by the Jews "the seal of the prophets." The time of his ministrations was in the fifth century B. C., and his death probably occurred about four hundred years B. C. Between this date and the birth of Christ there is no sacred record, except the Apocrypha, by which we are able to discover the conditions through which the Jews passed during this interval.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE APOCRYPHA.



HERE are fourteen books in the Apocrypha, in the following order, viz.: 1 and 2 Esdras; Tobit; Judith; the rest of the chapters of Esther; the Wisdom of Solomon; the Wisdom of Jesus, or Ecclesiasticus; Baruch; The Songs of the Three Holy Children; The History of Susanna; History of the Destruction of Bel and the Dragon; the Prayer of Manasses; and 1 and 2 Maccabees.

The original meaning of the Greek word, Apocrypha, was "hidden, secret;" but about the end of the second century the signification was changed to "spurious," or "unpublished." The term is, however, variously applied in the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. The former uses the word to designate those books which were refused admission to the canon of the Old Testament. Protestant theology generally calls them *pseudepigrapha*, or doubtful records, and made them the subject of much dispute until they were declared, by the Council of Trent, to be a part of the canon. These books are not included in the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament, but the Septuagint embraced them, and having been frequently quoted by the early Church writers as sacred books, they were at length received into the Christian canon by a synod of African bishops held at Hippo A. D. 393, and were accordingly adopted by the Latin, or Catholic Church.

The Protestants continued to print the Apocryphal books in all their Bibles until about the year 1821, when discussions arose in the British and Foreign Bible Society which, in 1826, resulted in the adoption of a resolution that that society should no longer include them in the Bibles which they circulated. German Protestants having long been divided on the subject, some of the most learned divines, like Hengstenberg and Stier, accepting the books as inspired writings, while others equally distinguished, such as Ebrard and Keerl, declare against their reception. The Greek Church, at a synod held in Jerusalem in 1672, adopted the Apocrypha as a part of the sacred writings. There are also several Apocryphal books of the New Testament, which Protestants generally hold to be spurious, claiming that they were written by heretics in the special interests of their sects. The Roman Catholics, however, accept them as authentic and adopt them in all their Bibles, in some of which appear a history of the boyhood of Jesus.

The Old Testament Apocrypha is generally a repetition of the history recorded in the other sacred books, going back even to the time of David and

Solomon, whose wise sayings are preserved in Ecclesiasticus. Maccabees is the only book of special interest in the Apocrypha, and even this is hardly important beyond the description given of the struggle for religious liberty against Antiochus Epiphanes. For a connection between the Old and New Testaments, showing the affairs and conditions of the Jews during the four hundred years preceding Christ, we must rely on profane history, which, however, is reliable, and quite as interesting as the Bible record.

CONDITION OF ISRAEL AFTER NEHEMIAH'S DEATH.

The Jews remained under the nominal dominion of Persia until 331 B. C., during which time, however, they had perfect religious liberty, and except for the tribute paid they were an independent nation. Nehemiah left his impress upon Israel not only in the social reform which he inaugurated, but especially in the re-establishment of the priesthood. Under his authority the high-priest became the first person in the government, and as a natural result, a hierarchy was established which continued until the Syrian persecutions, about B. C. 170, as will be hereafter described. Eliashib was appointed high-priest in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and at his death the office passed to his son Joiada, who held it but a short time when his son Jonathan (John) succeeded to the office and held it for a period of forty-six years, from B. C. 405-359. The chief event in his rule, by which he is best remembered, is a bloody one. His brother Joshua (Jesus) was suspected of conspiring with a Persian satrap named Bagosas, to possess the high-priesthood, and without confirming the reasons for his suspicions Jonathan slew his brother in the Temple, an act at once atrocious and sacrilegious. For this crime he received no other punishment that that imposed by Bagosas, who required him thereafter, as a penalty, to pay a tax of fifty shekels, or a sum equal to something more than thirty dollars, for every lamb offered in sacrifice, which tax the satrap collected by polluting the Temple with his presence and demanding it in person.

THE JEWS ARE DIVIDED BY THE BUILDING OF A SECOND TEMPLE.

Jonathan was succeeded by his son Jaddua (B. C. 350), who is the last high-priest mentioned in the Old Testament. The duration of his pontificate—which the office of high-priest manifestly was—was for twenty years, so that he was in office at the time of the downfall of the Persian empire and the death of Darius. About this time it is recorded that Sanballat, a Jew who was puffed up with ambition, upon learning that Alexander the Great had designs upon Jerusalem, presented himself before the great Grecian conqueror upon the following mission: He represented that Manasseh, his son-in-law, was brother of Jaddua, and that he was therefore in the line of Levitical descent to the priesthood. He also told Alexander that it was the desire of Manasseh, as well as of a large number of the Jews, that another temple be built in which to worship God, and that it would be to the interest of

ander to encourage this desire, because if there should be two temples dedicated to God and the high-priest thus officiating among the people, that the nation would therefore be divided, and accordingly be more easily subjugated, an argument which so pleased Alexander that he immediately gave Sanballat permission to build such a temple, and to make Manasseh high-priest thereof.

Soon after the building of the new temple, which was at Mount Gerizim, Alexander, having already taken Damascus, went against Tyre. After investing the city he sent a demand to the Jews for supplies, and also promised that if they would submit to him he would extend his protection over them. To this they replied that they were faithful subjects of Darius, and had therefore to refuse all his demands, though they treated his messengers with much respect. In seven months, however, Tyre capitulated, which was followed by the fall of Gaza two months later, and the victorious Alexander marched against Jerusalem.

ALEXANDER PROSTRATES HIMSELF BEFORE JADDUA.

When Jaddua heard how all Palestine was overrun by the Macedonians, and that Alexander was then marching on Jerusalem because of his anger at the refusal of the Jews to furnish his army with provisions, he was in great distress, and called upon the people to make sacrifices, and to pray God to avert the peril in which the nation stood. In answer to this prayer God appeared to Jaddua in a dream and ordered him, after making proper sacrifices, to adorn the city with banners and garlands, as if in a celebration of a gala occasion, and to open the gates to Alexander. He was also charged to put on the high-priest vestments, and to clothe all the priests in fine linen and the people in white garments, and thus appalled to go forth and meet the conqueror.

Jaddua followed the admonition that had been given him, and when Alexander drew near to the gates he went out to meet him, followed by the priests and a great multitude of the citizens. Jaddua went to meet Alexander at a place called Sapha, which signifies a *prospect*, so named because from the spot a splendid view of Jerusalem and the Temple is to be had. At this sight the Phœnician and Chaldean soldiers thought they would be permitted to plunder the city without being opposed, but Alexander bade his army to remain in camp while he went up the hill unattended, and seeing the multitude in white garments, and Jaddua clothed in purple, with a mitre upon his head in which was a golden plate with the name of God engraved thereon, he prostrated himself in an attitude of adoration. At this strange proceeding every one wondered, but none were so greatly surprised as the kings of Syria, who thought Alexander must have become disordered in his mind. At length one of his generals, named Parmenio, ventured to ask the conqueror the cause of his singular conduct, to which Alexander replied: "I did not adore the high-priest, but that God who hath honored him with the high-priesthood; for I



ALEXANDER AT THE SIEGE OF TYRE.

saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was in Dios, in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is, that having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision, and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under the Divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius and destroy the power of the Persians." When Alexander had made this reply he took hold of Jaddua's hand, and with him went into the city and also into the Temple, where he made sacrifices to God, according to the high-priest's direction. When he had completed his sacrificing, the book of Daniel was brought, and those portions referring to the destruction of the Persians by a king of the Greeks were read to him (viii. 3-8, 20-22; xi. 3). At this Alexander was so well pleased that he called the people to meet him again on the following day, and promised to grant them any favor that they might ask; whereupon the high-priest asked him to procure for them the enjoyment of the laws of their forefathers, and to exempt them from paying tribute after seven years; Jaddua also asked that the Jews who were yet in Babylon and Media might enjoy the same privileges, all of which requests Alexander made a solemn promise to grant.

After making a covenant with the Jews in Jerusalem, Alexander led his army into the neighboring cities, where he was hospitably received, and where he also made many generous promises, by which he gained a large number of recruits from the Jews. The favors which he showed the Israelites wherever he went admonished the people of Shechem that they had better also procure his friendship, lest he might become prejudiced against them through the adverse reports of the people. Shechem was the metropolis of the Samaritans, who, through the representations of Sanballat, as already described, had built a temple on Mount Gerizim, at the base of which was situated the city. Here they followed their own inclinations, and it is also probable worshipped idols, for which purpose the temple was certainly built. There were a number of apostate Jews among them, who were doubtless well treated by the Samaritans, but generally there was no affiliation between the two, as explained in previous pages.

To obtain the favor of Alexander, the Samaritans professed themselves to be Jews, and sent a delegation to invite him to honor their city with his presence. When he became their guest they showed him the greatest attention and appointed the soldiers of Sanballat—who was now dead—as a guard of honor to conduct him to the temple they had built. When they had flattered him with such unction as they could command, they petitioned him to grant them the remission of tribute after the seventh year. This request somewhat surprised Alexander, who had already given this promise to all

Jews, so that he asked, "Are you not Jews?" With some confusion they replied that they were Hebrews, but had the name of Sidonians, living at Shechem, by which evasion and confusion Alexander discovered that they had tried to deceive him, and instead of granting their request he carried away with him the Sanballat soldiers, and took them to Egypt to guard a portion of the country he had subjugated.

The temple at Gerizim was permitted to remain, but it served no longer the uses to which it was dedicated. Josephus tells us that it afterwards served as a refuge for Jews who had committed any crime in Jerusalem; and we also know that it was standing even during the time of Christ, but the uses to which it was put are not described, nor is the circumstance of its destruction recorded.

THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM BY PTOLEMY.

Jaddua was succeeded in the priesthood by his son Onias I., who exercised the office from about B. C. 330 to B. C. 300, during which time the empire of Alexander was largely extended; but Palestine, though nominally a portion of the Greek empire, was treated still as a part of Syria and was ruled by Laomedon until B. C. 321, when he was dispossessed by Ptolemy, an Egyptian satrap. This ruler was very ambitious, and as Alexander the Great had died two years before, there was no one to restrain his inclination. Accordingly, Ptolemy made an expedition against Jerusalem, and attacking the city on a Sabbath, when he knew that the Jews would make no resistance, he easily effected its capture. Instead of disgracing his conquest by a slaughter of the people, however, as was the custom of the times, he carried away a great number of both the Jews and Samaritans, whom he transferred to Alexandria and conferred upon them all the rights of citizenship. This humane treatment, which was adopted with the view of increasing the importance of Alexandria and of Egypt as well, caused many other Jews to abandon Palestine of their own accord to settle in Egypt, where their condition was vastly improved.

Several wars followed soon after the capture of Jerusalem, in which Antigonus opposed Ptolemy until the decisive battle of Ipsus (B. C. 300), when all of Palestine and Phœnicia was conceded to Ptolemy, under whom, and his successors, it remained until about B. C. 198.

Very soon after the battle of Ipsus, by the death of Onias I., the high priesthood devolved upon his son, Simon I. (B. C. 300), to whom was directly afterward applied the appellation "The Just," bestowed out of compliment for his justice and wisdom. His administration is eulogized in the book of "Jesus the Son of Sirach," wherein we are told that Simon increased the size of the Temple, and doubly strengthened its walls, besides administering the Temple services in a manner never attempted by his predecessors. Tradition tells us that Simon was the last survivor of the Great Synagogue of 120, which was established by Ezra on the return of the Jews from their captivity under the

Syrian kings, and to him is also ascribed the completion of the canon of the Old Testament.

CALAMITIES FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF SIMON.

The death of Simon, which occurred about B. C. 292, is said to have been followed by many miraculous events presaging what calamities were to speedily



BATTLE BETWEEN ANTIGONUS AND PTOLEMY.

come upon the Jews. It is told that during his life all the sacrifices made were acceptable, but immediately after they were invariably unfavorable, while the sacrificial fires were frequently extinguished, and when aflame burned with an unsteady glow and shed no light. The sacrificial bread was baked amid difficulties never before experienced, and when laid away it diminished until

there was never sufficient for the priesthood. But more ominous than all these signs was the ending of the ceremony of sacrificing the scape-goat. It had been the Jewish custom since the time of Moses to lay the sins of the people upon a goat, and to throw the animal from a precipice, so that it might be dashed to pieces, its death representing or serving an atonement for the sins of the race. Upon the occasion of this sacrifice after Simon's death, however, the goat, though hurled from an amazing height, fell upon the rocks below unharmed, and escaped into the desert. The calamities which these several omens seemed to foretell proved delusive, as subsequent events proved, and we are left to believe that tradition has greatly exaggerated the facts.

Antigonus Socho became founder of the New Synagogue, and it is said to have received from Simon the oral traditions which had been preserved since the time of Moses. His influence upon the Jews as a teacher was very great, and to him is ascribed the doctrine that God should be served faithfully without regard for reward. Notwithstanding the influence of Socho, there arose one named Sadduc, who opposed the doctrine of disinterestedness, by denying that God either punishes or rewards hereafter. This belief obtained among many Jews who thereafter were known as disciples of Sadduc, or *Sadducees*.

ELEAZAR AND THE SEPTUAGINT.

On the death of Simon—his son not being old enough to assume the priesthood—his brother Eleazar succeeded him. This man was devoted to literature, and, appreciating the need of a reliable history of the Jews, represented to the king, Ptolemy II., Philadelphus, his desire for an authentic transcription, and accordingly obtained an order for the appointment of seventy-two translators to compile the Jewish history. This work was performed by the most learned Jews of Alexandria, who spent many years upon the task, which is preserved under the name of the *Septuagint*. The design of Eleazar, in having the sacred writings translated into the Greek, was evident enough. The conquests of Alexander had led to an infusion of Greek manners and influence among the Jews, and particularly to the adoption of the Greek language, which had fairly *Hellenized* all of Egypt and western Asia. Eleazar therefore foresaw the necessity of introducing the religious doctrines of his race among the Greeks, which could best be done by translating the history of his people, through Jewish sources, into that language, the result of which was the adoption of a common religion by half the world.

Eleazar was succeeded by Manasseh, whose tenure was short and unimportant, as was also that of Onias II. (B. C. 240), who died in B. C. 226, and was followed by Simon II. Four years after Simon had assumed the priesthood, Ptolemy IV. became king of Egypt, upon whom war was made by Antiochus III., called "The Great," king of Syria, for the provinces of Phœnicia, Coelesyria, and Palestine. The result of this war was the imposition of hardships upon the Jews from which they had been exempt for nearly two

hundred years. The two kings met with their armies at a plain near Gaza, where was fought the battle of Raphia (B. C. 217), in which Antiochus was defeated with immense loss. His pride being exalted by this victory, Ptolemy went to Jerusalem, and after making sacrifices persisted in entering the Holy of Holies, from whence, however, he was driven by a manifestation of supernatural power. Burning with resentment he returned to Alexandria and began a most cruel persecution of the Jews, which resulted in an alienation of those in Egypt and Palestine.

Ptolemy died in B. C. 205, and was succeeded by Ptolemy V., Epiphanes, a child only five years of age. This circumstance gave Antiochus another opportunity to gain what he had vainly attempted to wrest from Ptolemy IV., Philopater. He accordingly formed a league with Philip V. of Macedon, and proceeded against Coëlesyria and Palestine and made himself master of those provinces (B. C. 198). While the Jews of Egypt suffered greatly in this conflict, those of Palestine were rewarded by a grant of an annual sum for sacrifices, and an order prohibiting foreigners from entering the Temple.

In the same year that Antiochus became master of Palestine, Simon II. was succeeded by Onias III. as high-priest, and shortly after Ptolemy Epiphanes married Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus, upon which the conquered provinces were given him again as a dowry, though absolute possession was not surrendered, the gift being no more than a privilege to collect the annual tax.

HELIODORUS REPULSED BY AN ANGEL.

Antiochus was seized of a distemper which he declared was sent upon him for the evil that he had done and contemplated against the Jews; he also foretold that he should die of his ailment, though the disease did not terminate fatally for some time; upon his death, as the king had appointed, Seleucus IV., Philopater, succeeded him, B. C. 187. During his reign the Jews suffered continually, though chiefly because of dissensions among themselves. It was during the reign of Seleucus that a wonderful miracle was performed to preserve the treasures of the Temple.

Under Onias III., the Apocrypha tells us, "the Holy City (Jerusalem) was inhabited with all peace, and the laws were kept very well, because of the godliness of Onias the high-priest, and his hatred of wickedness. There was at this time, however, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, named Simon, and who was governor of the Temple, who conceived a great jealousy for Onias, and after vainly endeavoring to prejudice the people against him, sought another means for attaining his infamous ends. In pursuance of his aim, therefore, he paid a visit to Apollonius, the son of the governor of Coëlesyria and Phœnicia, to whom he represented that the treasury of the Temple "was full of infinite sums of money, so that the multitude of their riches, which did not pertain to the account of the sacrifices, was innumerable, and that it was possible to bring all into the king's hand."

As Simon had anticipated, Apollonius hastened to tell the king of the immense wealth which might be justly taken from the Temple, since it was not used, or intended to defray the expense of the sacrifices, and so excited the cupidity of Seleucus that he forthwith ordered Heliodorus, his treasurer,



HELIODORUS PUNISHED IN THE TEMPLE.

proceed to Jerusalem and take away the money of the Temple and bring it to him. Heliodorus proceeded at once to obey the king's orders, and when he had reached Jerusalem he was received with many manifestations of pleasure by the priests, they not knowing for what purpose he had come. After receiving their courtesies he at length revealed to them what had been told the king, and asked if it were true that there was so much money stored in the Temple. To this they replied that there was a sum of four hundred talents of silver and two hundred talents of gold, laid up for the relief of the widows and fatherless children, some of which belonged to Hyrcanus, the son of Tobias. But they con-

ceived it to be impossible that any one should covet that which had been committed to the holiness of the place, or to violate the sanctity of the Temple which was honored even by kings all over the world. To this, however, Heliodorus only answered that he had been sent upon the king's business, and

that he should obey the orders given him to take away the money on the morrow. When it was understood that he would certainly rifle the treasury of its currency, the priests went into the Temple and there prostrating themselves before the altar, called to God, that he might preserve inviolate the money committed to their care. To this supplication was added that of all the citizens of Jerusalem, who prayed openly in the streets, and women clothed themselves in sackcloth and went through the streets praying, while maidens offered their supplications from the city walls or at the gates, the universal entreaty being for the preservation of the treasure.

Heliodorus, though besought to renounce the purpose for which he had come, turned a deaf ear to all prayer and entreaty, being resolved to carry away the money to enrich the already enormous wealth of his king. Accordingly, on the day appointed, he gathered his guards about him and proceeded to the Temple, but when he was upon the point of going in a wonderful apparition appeared which entered in with him, and when Heliodorus had reached that part of the Temple where the money was stored, the apparition became more terrible until it assumed the form of a horse, upon the back of which rode an angel carrying a scourge. Those who were with the king's treasurer fell down in a faint from great fear, but they received no harm. The horse ran fiercely upon Heliodorus, however, and struck at him with his fore feet, while the rider scourged him sorely. "Moreover, two other young men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on either side, and scourged him continually, and gave him many sore stripes."

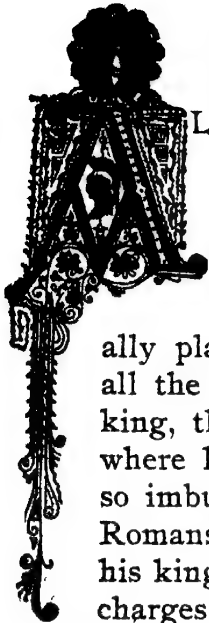
When the angels had beaten Heliodorus some time, the place was suddenly enveloped in darkness, so that lights had to be brought, and the stricken treasurer carried from the sacred place on a litter, and when he was brought out it was found that he was near to death from the punishment. The friends of Heliodorus now begged Onias that he would pray to God to spare his life, seeing that he had been dealt with by the Lord, which request was granted, but rather out of fear that the king would suspect some treachery. So Onias prayed God to restore Heliodorus, and the priests also offered sacrifices for his health, during which the angel again appeared before the suffering man and bade him give thanks to Onias, since for his sake the Lord had granted his life. Said the angel: "Seeing that thou hast been scourged from heaven, declare unto all men the mighty power of God."

Heliodorus returned hearty thanks to Onias for sparing his life, and when he had returned to the king and reported all that had befallen him he said to Seleucus: "If thou hast any enemy or traitor, send him thither (to the Temple for the money), and thou shalt receive him well scourged, if he escape with his life; for in that place, no doubt, there is an especial power of God."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SACK OF JERUSALEM AND POLLUTION OF THE TEMPLE.

Apocrypha.



ALTHOUGH Heliodorus was unsuccessful in his efforts to loot the Temple of its treasure, and notwithstanding the report which he carried back to Seleucus, Simon continued to prejudice the king against Onias, and a feud soon after began which led to the most distressing results, as we shall see.

The accession of Antiochus, nicknamed the "madman," literally placed Judea under the domination of Syria, and took from the Jews all the privileges that they had enjoyed under the Ptolemies. This cruel king, the son of Antiochus the Great, had been sent to Rome as a hostage, where he was treated with such marks of consideration that he became so imbued with Hellenistic ideas and admiration for the Greeks and Romans, as to hold his own subjects in contempt. Upon his return to his kingdom he found Onias at Antioch defending himself against the base charges of Simon and his own brother Joshua (Jesus), who had adopted the Greek name of Jason. To the opposition of Simon and Jason, Antiochus IV. added that of his own, so that Onias III. was speedily deposed from the priesthood and the office given to Jason. The Hellenizing spirit now became stronger than ever among the Jews, as Jason neglected the Temple service and established a gymnasium wherein the Greek athletic exercises were taught and the mark of circumcision made odious.

Jason held the office of high-priest for a period of three years, when he was deposed by Menelaus (B. C. 172), who had purchased the office by a large bribe to the king. If Jason was sacrilegious in his conduct, Menelaus was a hypocrite and devil incarnate. He came to Jerusalem, as the chronicler wisely describes him, "having the fury of a cruel tyrant, and the rage of a wild beast," Jason fled for his life to the Ammonites, while the new high-priest plunged into a mad revelry of dissipation and persecution. In order to raise the money that he had promised to pay the king for the office, he sold many of the sacred vessels of the Temple to the Tyrians. Onias, who was still at Antioch, charged Menelaus with the sacrilege, but would have immediately perished for his boldness had he not fled for safety to the sacred grove of Daphne. But even here he was destined to remain only a short time unmolested, for Menelaus instigated Andronicus to entice Onias from the grove and murder him (B. C. 171). Antiochus, however, was deeply incensed by the cruelty thus exhibited, and in turn ordered the execution of the murderer.

He would also have visited Menelaus with a like punishment, had not the crafty high-priest placated the king by a large gift of money, raised, no doubt, like his first bribe, by a sale of sacred vessels, or by treasure taken from the Temple.

About this time Antiochus engaged in a war with Egypt, in which he was successful during the interval B. C. 178-168. In one of his campaigns (B. C. 170) a report was spread abroad that the king had been slain, whereupon Jason raised a body of one thousand men and attacked Jerusalem and drove Menelaus into the citadel, but after practising barbaric cruelties upon the citizens for three days he was forced to evacuate the place and flee to Ammon, where he soon after died.

The report of Jason's insurrection reached Antiochus while he was in Egypt, and supposing that all Judea had revolted he hastened back and fell with fury upon Jerusalem, which he took by storm and put forty thousand of the inhabitants to the sword, besides selling as many more into slavery. Menelaus again succeeded in diverting the king from his own crimes by offering to conduct him through the Temple and assist in its profanation. Accordingly, the high-priest made a sacrifice of swine upon the altar, and making a broth by boiling the flesh, sprinkled it over the sanctuary, besides defiling the Holy of Holies with ordure. The king then took away all the treasures of the Temple, amounting to one thousand eight hundred talents, and leaving a Phrygian named Philip as governor of Jerusalem, he went to Gerizim, where he profaned the Samaritan temple in like manner.

"And besides, Menelaus, who was worse than all the rest, bore a heavy hand over the citizens, having a malicious mind against his countrymen, the Jews. He sent also that detestable ringleader, Apollonius, with an army of twenty-two thousand, commanding him to slay all those that were in their best age, and to sell the women and the younger sort; who, coming to Jerusalem, and pretending peace, did forbear till the holy day of the Sabbath, when taking the Jews, keeping holy day, he commanded his men to arm themselves. And so he slew all them that were gone to the celebrating of the Sabbath, and running through the city with weapons slew great multitudes. But Judas Maccabeus, with nine others, or thereabouts, withdrew himself into the wilderness, and lived in the mountains after the manner of beasts with his company, who fed on herbs continually, lest they should be partakers of the pollution."

DREADFUL PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS.

Antiochus did not cease vexing the people with the sack of Jerusalem and pollution of the Temple, for these sacrileges only seem to have inspired him with the desire to perpetrate greater infamies. In pursuance of his savage disposition and ambition, he appointed an old fanatic, of Athens, as religious governor of Judea and Samaria, ostensibly to enforce a uniformity of worship throughout these dominions. In reality, however, his intention was to perse-

cute the Jews in a manner that they had never before, as a race, been subjected to. The first act of the gubernatorial Athenian, acting under instructions of Antiochus, was to further pollute the Temple of Jerusalem by giving to it the name of the "Temple of Jupiter Olympus," while that of Gerizim was thereafter called the "Temple of Jupiter the Defender of Strangers." In the former he caused to be enacted some of the most shameful acts that history has ever described; indeed, history blushes and recoils from the attempt to describe them. It was an effort to exterminate the Jewish religion and substitute therefor the Phallic worship of the Greeks and of Dionysius particularly. For an understanding of the orgies and worship thus practised we have to go to Knight's "History of Phallic Worship," a book so obscene that it can be retained in public libraries only by being kept under lock and key.

Besides trying to obliterate the religion of the Jews by appealing to and encouraging lustful passions, the idolatry of Baal was openly set up, the Book of the Law either destroyed or profaned by obscene interpolations, while circumcision and refusal to sacrifice to Baal were made capital offenses. The persecutions which followed an enforcement of these cruel and odious laws were indescribably terrible. Women who had their babes circumcised were led in derision around the city and then executed by being thrown from the walls. A party of Jews were detected in a cave keeping the Sabbath, and immediately the exit was barred and a fire started at the mouth of the cave, by which the worshippers were slowly roasted. One of the common tests applied by Philip to determine the loyalty of Jews to the laws of Moses was by forcing them to eat swine's flesh. A notable case of resistance by this iniquitous test is given us in Maccabees, wherein Eleazar, a wise and noble Jew, past ninety years of age, preferred torture to a violation of the Mosaic injunction. When his tormentors offered him a piece of pork he boldly rejected it, and when they sought to force it into his mouth he spat it out, and to the requests of his friends, who besought him to eat of the unclean food as a means of preserving his life from his enemies, he made answer: "It becometh not our age in any wise to dissemble whereby many young persons might think that Eleazar, being four-score years old and ten, were now to go to a strange religion, and so through mine hypocrisy, and desire to live a little time, should be deceived by me, and I get a stain to my old age, and make it abominable. For though for the present time I should be delivered from the punishment of men, yet I should not escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead." He concluded by declaring his resolve, "to leave a notable example to such as be young to die willingly and courageously for the honorable and holy laws."

THE HORRIBLE PUNISHMENT OF SEVEN SONS AND THEIR MOTHER.

Eleazar died under the scourgings of his tormentors, but his sufferings were unworthy to be compared with that of a mother and her seven sons, who

refused, under threats of direful penalties, to partake of the forbidden flesh. Antiochus himself dealt with the recusants, and found in them a measure of faith that was destined to trouble him sorely thereafter.

When the king learned that the family of mother and sons stoutly resisted obedience to his injunction, he commanded that they be tormented with scourges and whips; but this punishment only made them declare that they would rather die than transgress the laws of their fathers. This declaration so enraged Antiochus that he ordered certain pans and caldrons to be heated, and when these were ready he commanded that the tongue of the eldest son be cut off, after which his legs and arms were amputated at the joints next the body, and the mutilated boy, still alive, was then brought to the fire and cast into a caldron to be boiled, and his limbs into a pan to be fried. As the vapor rose from the vessel the mother and remaining sons exhorted each other to remain steadfast and die heroically for the faith.

The second son was next led forth and the scalp torn from his head, in which condition he was asked if he would eat, or rather go to a horrible death like that which had befallen his brother. Bravely he answered, "No!" and submitted himself with extraordinary courage to the knife and flames. When the third was called he came promptly forth and put out his tongue voluntarily, and held forth his hands to be cut off, saying: "These I had from Heaven; and for His laws I despise them; and from Him I hope to receive them again."

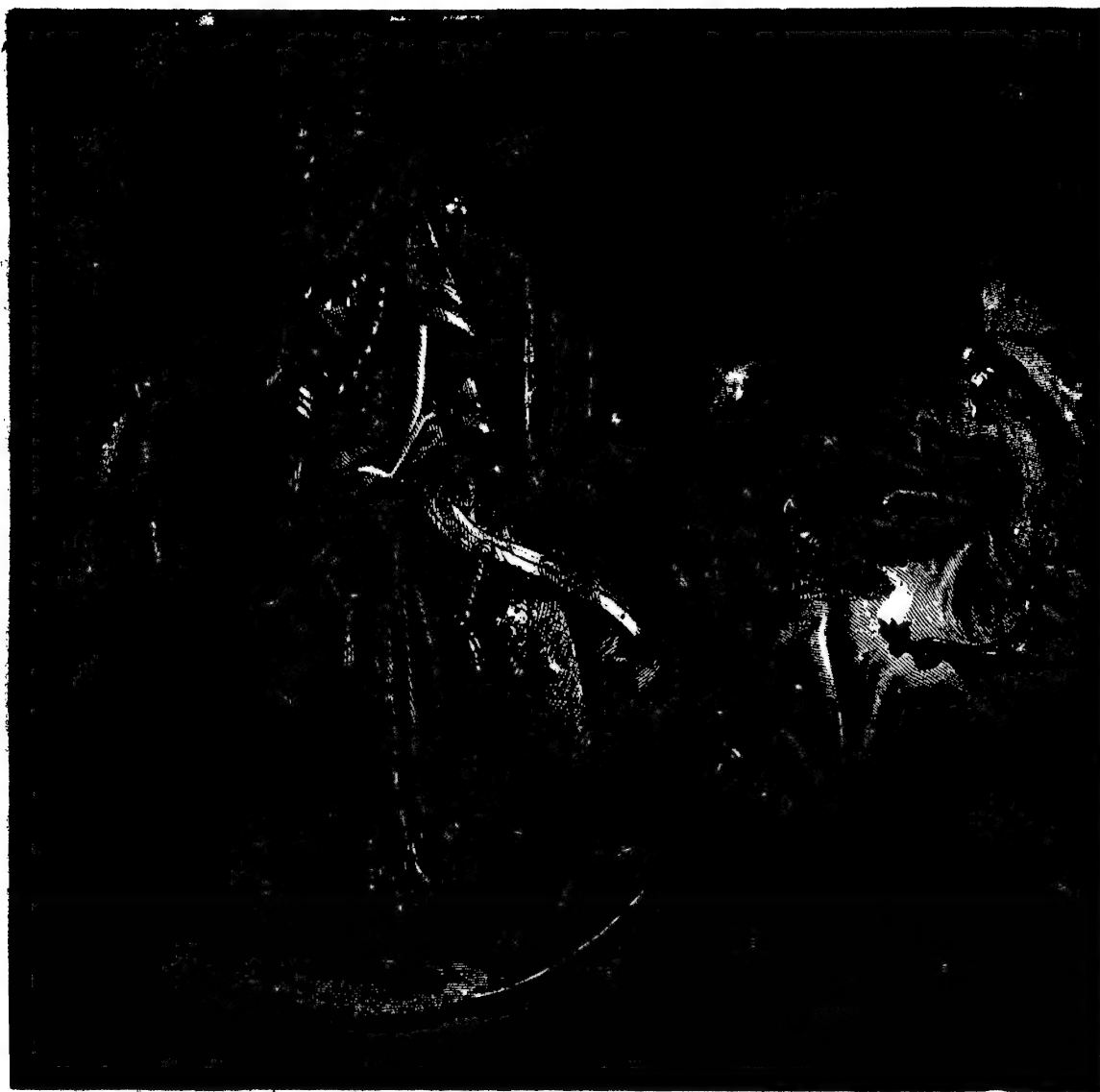
And thus one after another all the seven brothers went cheerfully to their deaths, and lastly the mother, who was no less courageous than her sons, displayed such wondrous fortitude that the king was greatly distressed in mind, feeling a pang of guilt that thereafter grew more intense daily until his death, which occurred after an agony of bodily afflictions, sent, no doubt, by God as a punishment for his crimes (B. C. 164).

DELIVERANCE OF THE JEWS BY MACCABEUS.

The heroism manifested by Eleazar and the mother and seven sons has but few parallels in history, particularly outside of what is called religious fanaticism, but another incident of equal fortitude occurred during the persecutions of Antiochus, which led to the deliverance of Judea from the yoke of Syrian oppression.

We have already mentioned how Maccabeus and eight others fled to the mountains when the persecutions were begun, but before betaking themselves to flight they had struck a blow at Hellenism, which, like the shot fired at Lexington, was heard round the world. In the ancient town of Modin there lived, at this time (about B. C. 166), an aged priest, called by some Mattathias, and by the Apocrypha chroniclers Maccabeus, who had five sons, viz.: Jonathan, Judas, Simon, Johanan, and Eleazar. He was a man of considerable possessions, but of greater influence, and above all was endowed with that

rugged disposition of which heroes are made, and which is most strongly manifested when great crises arise. Antiochus sent to Maccabeus his officer, Appelles, with splendid offers of preferment to secure his submission to the royal edicts, but to all such advances the aged priest turned a deaf ear and



JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOFERNES.

(Apocrypha : JUDITH xiii.)

declared his purpose to live always according to the covenants made between God and His chosen people through Moses. Other Jews, however, foreseeing the persecution which would follow disobedience to the king, readily apostatized, and before Maccabeus one of these advanced to make a sacrifice to Baal,

when the old priest became so incensed that he struck the apostate dead, and turning then upon Appelles, gave him also a mortal blow.

Realizing that his act would speedily bring down upon his head the vengeance of Antiochus, Maccabeus harangued the people by whom he was sur-



PUNISHMENT OF ANTIOCHUS.—2 MACCABEES ix. 7.

rounded, and called upon them to join his standard of revolt against the king and to fight for God and the religion of their fathers. A few followed him, among whom were his five sons, and, making a quick retreat before officers apprehend them, they sought refuge in caves, with which the country

abounded. His force gradually increased until within a year two thousand or more Jews, steadfast in the faith, had united their fortunes with the aged priest, who they rightfully believed was under the Divine protection. The recusants were hunted, however, like wild game by the Syrian troops, who, on one occasion, during the Sabbath, attacked them in a cave and slew half the whole number, or above a thousand. Up to this time the Jews had refused to even defend themselves on the Sabbath, and thus they frequently fell an easy prey to their enemies on that day, but the destruction of half his followers in the cave, by reason of their religious scruples, led Maccabeus to introduce a new teaching among his people, wherein he showed the lawfulness of defending themselves at all times against the enemies of God.

Though in the beginning the insurgents met with many repulses, still there was a constant increase in their numbers, which multiplied when they began aggressive measures against the Syrians and apostate Jews. In the second year of the revolt Maccabeus led his forces, numbering now several thousand, against the least protected towns of the country, and struck consternation into the enemy. He broke all the idols he could find and put the idolaters to death, and in addition to this compelled all his captives to circumcise their children, and set up synagogues where he enforced the Jewish worship. His wonderful success was cut short by death, which claimed him in the third year of his patriotic endeavors, and he was peacefully laid at rest in his native town of Modin.

JUDAS MACCABEUS LEADS HIS ARMY AGAINST THE SYRIANS.

The revolt did not cease with Mattathias's death, for his third eldest son, Judas, took up the cause where his father had left it, and pushed the enemy even more vigorously than had Maccabeus, whose age had prevented the activity that his spirit would have joyfully executed.

Judas also received the name Maccabeus, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies *the Hammerer*, and is henceforth variously called Judas, Judas Maccabeus, and Maccabeus. His first act was to put forth special effort to recruit his army to the greatest number possible, and then to meet the enemy in the open field and to lay siege to their cities. In a short time he found himself at the head of six thousand enthusiastic troops, thoroughly imbued with the belief that God was their leader, and that however great the Syrian host against them, they should conquer in the Lord's name. Their success was very great from the beginning, for by masking their movements and making their attacks at night they captured several cities and fortified them, in each of which new recruits were added sufficient for garrison purposes. Judas's first battle in the open field was with Apollonius, governor of Samaria, whom he defeated, though his force was scarcely half of that led by the Syrian governor. Seron, governor of Coëlsyria, next went against Judas, whom he met at the memorable pass of Beth-horon, where Joshua overcame the Canaan-

ites more than a thousand years before. The victory was again with the Jews, after a sharp contest in which the loss of the enemy was greater than that of the entire army of Judas.

The crushing defeats sustained by Apollonius and Seron brought to Antiochus a realizing sense of the grave danger which now threatened his dominion. For to these victories of Judas was added another perplexing misfortune, being an exhausted treasury, due to the refusal of Armenia and Persia to pay their annual tributes. Thus he was menaced by foes on both the east and west, and was compelled to proceed against the Armenians himself, while intrusting the suppression of the insurrection in Judea to his general, Lysias, thus dividing his forces, and rendering success in both enterprises less probable.

Judas was quick to recognize his advantage, and turned his attention toward Jerusalem itself. Philip, governor of the city, in anticipation of an attack from Judas, called urgently for relief, which was responded to by Nicanor and Gorgias, who led the Syrian vanguard of twenty thousand soldiers. As they put their troops in motion toward Jerusalem they were quickly followed by Ptolemy Macron with twenty-seven thousand more troops, the two forces soon after forming a junction near Emmaus.

Judas kept himself advised as to the enemies' movements, and though he still had but six thousand soldiers, he did not hesitate to lead these few against the forty thousand foot and seven thousand cavalry of the Syrians, who, he knew, were then trying to surround him. Before going into battle he called his troops together before the sanctuary of Mizpeh, where he fasted and prayed according to the laws and customs of his forefathers. When the period of devotion was accomplished he issued a proclamation, according to the Mosaic injunction, that those of his soldiers who were married, or were fearful of the battle, should return to their homes, whereupon no less than three thousand, or one-half of his entire force, immediately left him, so that his little army was as one to fifteen of that of the enemy. Placing his reliance in Jehovah, Judas resolved to lead his small but devout and heroic band against the Syrians, who were encamped at Emmaus. With his characteristic energy and audacity, finding that Gorgias with six thousand men had been detached to gain his rear, Judas resolved to attack the main body in their camp at night. This resolve was put into execution at an hour before the break of day, while the Syrians were sleeping and unconscious of the proximity of any foes. The impetuosity with which the attack was made rendered the Syrians almost helpless, and when three thousand of their number were slain the rest of the army fled in a wild rout in four different directions, like affrighted quails, taking no time to either defend themselves or carry away any of their arms or provisions.

Instead of permitting his army to sack the camp, Judas wisely restrained them, knowing that Gorgias must soon return when he discovered that the Jews had abandoned Mizpeh. Nor was the wisdom of this sagacious policy long in

being manifested, for in the afternoon of the same day Gorgias returned to camp, while the Jews lay in ambush until an auspicious time, when they rose up as one man, and like a whirlwind descended upon their enemies. So complete was the surprise that the Syrians were beaten with great slaughter, and fled without so much as offering a resistance. When the victory was completed, the victors were permitted to spoil the camp, in which they found large quantities of treasures, such as gold, silver, rich silks and many arms and provisions. These were divided and a due portion given to the orphans and widows.

These magnificent victories only served to make Judas ambitious for greater undertakings; therefore, without taking time to rest his army, he marched beyond the Jordan and attacked a body of Syrians under the command of Timotheus and Bacchides, whom he easily defeated, and from whom he captured a quantity of arms.

Two months after these events, or early in B. C. 165, Lysias raised an army of sixty thousand and went to Bethsura, on the southern frontier of Judea, from whence he intended to renew operations against Judas, whose army at this time had been increased to ten thousand effective men. Judas, learning of these movements, did not wait for an attack, but boldly pushed forward and invited an engagement in an open field with the proud Lysias. A terrific battle ensued, which, after several hours, resulted in a defeat of the Syrians with a loss of five thousand slain.

This victory left the route open for Judas to Jerusalem, upon which he at once marched and entered the city without opposition, though a force of Syrians still held possession of the strong tower on Mount Zion. The sight which met his eyes was one which excited him to the exhibition of great sorrow, for he found the Temple almost destroyed by the profanation to which it had been subject and the neglect it had afterward received. Nevertheless, Judas and his followers gave praise to God for having made them the instrument for the reclamation of the cities and the holy shrines of the Temple, which they immediately set about to repair, and held a feast of solemn dedication, which has ever since been observed as a mark of the regeneration of the people as well as the re-establishment of the Temple.

ELEAZAR'S HEROIC DEATH IN BATTLE.

Though Judas had defeated the Syrians in every engagement, and had made himself master of a very large portion of Judea, where he had set up anew the worship of God, his enemies continued active in vexing the Jews, many of whom were treacherously murdered, and upon the accession of Antiochus V., Eupator, B. C. 164, hostilities were renewed under Lysias against Judas. War was begun again by Lysias laying siege to Bethsura, which Judas had strongly fortified and garrisoned with several thousand troops. The force which the Syrians brought against this place consisted of one hundred thousand infantry, twenty thousand cavalry, and thirty-two elephants trained to war



ELEAZAR KILLED BY AN ELEPHANT.

in the far east, but never before used in the western provinces. These animals were relied upon to strike terror into the Jews, which they partially succeeded in doing. Each elephant was richly caparisoned with bright cloths and gleaming breast and forehead armor, while upon the back was a howdah, in which eight men stationed with cross-bows and javelins, being thus elevated so that they could hurl their weapons with greater effect and precision, while the huge animal would trample the enemy and carry destruction with his tusks and trunk.

The powerful army sent against Bethsura failed to accomplish its capitulation, since the garrison held out by the manifestation of extraordinary heroism until Judas could march from Jerusalem to the rescue. When the relief party came upon the scene the battle waged with ten-fold increased fury. Eleazar, the brother of Judas, displayed such valor that his name has survived to this day as the synonym of patriotism and courage. He was ever in the thickest of the fight, plying his sword with a desperate energy and exciting the admiration even of his enemy. At length, perceiving the largest elephant of the Syrian host trampling hundreds of his valiant countrymen under foot, while the beast was carrying terror among the soldiers, Eleazar ran up to the huge beast and plunged his spear into its belly, until the mighty animal fell dead, but in its fall it crushed out the noble life of the heroic and self-sacrificing Maccabean.

The death of Eleazar had a most discouraging effect upon the Jews, who continued to fight, however, until they were fairly overwhelmed by superiority of numbers; Judas was compelled to retreat to Jerusalem, where he resisted every effort made to capture the city. Bethsura also held out for a long while, and until famine forced the garrison to surrender upon honorable terms.

Wars continued between the Jews and Syrians, involving the Romans ultimately, until the death of Judas, B. C. 161. He was permitted to lead the army of Judea, however, until he had defeated Nicanor in a great battle wherein the Syrians lost thirty-five thousand men, and had established the worship of God and the independence of all Judea.

Here ends the history of the Apocrypha, which leaves an interval of one hundred and sixty-one years between the death of Judas and the birth of Christ. For events which occurred during this time we are dependent entirely upon profane history. All of Judas's brothers, except Eleazar, attained to the high-priesthood, in which office they discharged their duties in a manner as honorable as was their patriotism. Though the war was continued for supremacy throughout Palestine, the Jews were generally successful until the death of John Hyrcanus, son of Simon, and high-priest from B. C. 135-106, under whom the Holy Land was restored to its ancient limits, according to the allotment of Joshua. Upon his death, however, affairs became less favorable to the Jews. The Hellenizing spirit again grew strong under Hyrcanus's son, Aristobulus, who was first of the Maccabean house to renounce the laws

of Moses and give himself to a course of wickedness and crime, and his end was a fitting conclusion to a life of infamy which would have been even greater had he survived longer.

ALEXANDER THE HORRIBLE.

Aristobulus was succeeded by his brother Alexander Janneus, who retained the priesthood until B. C. 78. His cruelty exceeded that of his infamous brother, and caused the people to give him a new name characteristic of his disposition, viz.: the Thracian. His ambition was immeasurable, and as a consequence the Jews were kept in a constant state of oppression. He aroused the enmity of Cleopatra and Ptolemy Lathyrus, who, though set to fighting between themselves, soon after invaded Palestine. His most dangerous enemies, however, were among the Pharisees of his own people, who began a revolt during the Feast of Tabernacles and pelted him with missiles as he was officiating as high-priest. To avenge this insult Alexander ordered his troops to destroy the multitude, which they did to the number of six thousand.

The very great disfavor in which he was held by his own people prompted Alexander to secure the services of a large number of foreign mercenaries, at the head of whom he marched against the country east of the Jordan and laid tribute upon Amathus, but he was soon after defeated by an Arabian king named Orodes. At the same time the Jews rose in rebellion, and though Alexander defeated them at first, they gained the help of Demetrius, a Syrian king, and defeated him in a battle in which nearly all his mercenaries were destroyed.

A year after his defeat by Demetrius, Alexander contrived to raise another army of sixty thousand men, with which he drove Demetrius out of Palestine and then captured Jerusalem from the insurgents. This success he signaled by giving a grand banquet to his numerous concubines, and as a divertisement for these creatures he publicly crucified eight hundred of his enemies, first murdering their wives and children before their faces. Four years after this shameful act he became afflicted with a painful malady, of which he died after enduring a suffering equal to that he had imposed upon his unfortunate enemies.

Alexander was succeeded by his wife Alexandra, who officiated at the head of the hierarchy for nine years and then gave place to Aristobulus, B. C. 69, who made terms with the Romans, but afterward found that he had admitted a new enemy into the country whom riches could not seduce from his purpose, as it was the intention of Pompey, the Roman leader, to make Palestine tributary to his own country. Finding that there were too many factions in Jerusalem to encourage a defense of the city, Aristobulus tried to purchase security for his people by an offer of a large sum of money and the surrender of the city; but while he was conducting negotiations with Pompey a faction in Jerusalem closed the gates and prepared to defend the place. Siege was

immediately laid to the city, but it was not until three months of vigorous fighting that the place was captured. Nor would its capture have been effected then had it not been for the observance of the Sabbath day, during which the Jews would not fight, and thus suffered the Romans to work unmolested with their battering rams until a breach in the towers was made.



CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM BY THE ROMANS.

When Pompey had captured Jerusalem he treated the Jews with unexpected magnanimity; instead of sacking the Temple of its treasure he commanded that it be purified, and would not suffer his soldiers to molest any of the sacred furniture. More than this, he set up Hyrcanus II. as high-priest, and assisted in the restoration of order and the institution of religious observance according to the Jewish worship. He contented himself with fixing the tribute that should be annually paid to Rome, and with carrying Aristobulus as prisoner back with him. This generous treatment had the excellent effect intended, for finding themselves so well respected by

their conquerors, the Jews at once became satisfied with their condition under Cæsar and were obedient subjects, which obtained for them such concessions as they chose to ask, besides a deliverance from the temporal power of the priesthood.

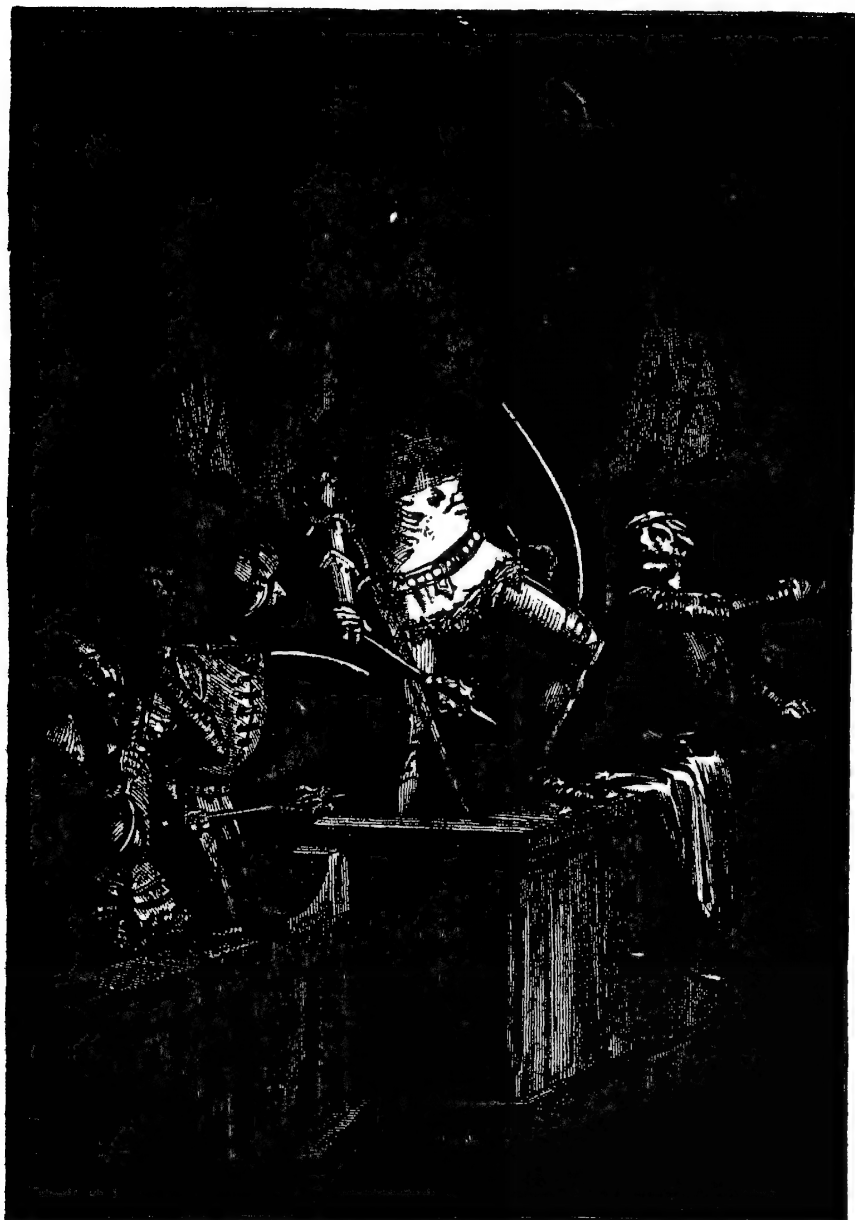
MARK ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

Civil war broke out in B. C. 49, shortly after the Temple had been pillaged by Crassus, king of Syria, during which Aristobulus was released and sent to Judea from Rome. He was basely murdered, however, while on the way, by friends of Pompey, and Antipater was made procurator of all Judea, by which it came almost exclusively under Roman administration. Antipater's four sons were placed in official positions, where they would be an aid in maintaining the supremacy throughout the several districts, and thus render rebellion, if attempted, less harmful. One of his sons, whose name was Herod, a character that figures so prominently in sacred history, was made governor of Galilee, and though only fifteen years of age at this time, he manifested thus early something of the cruel disposition which distinguished his life. One of his first acts was to execute the leader of an opposing faction, for which offense he was ordered to appear before the Sanhedrim for trial, but Hyrcanus adjourned the hearing so as to permit of his escape to Damascus, where he found protection from Sextus Cæsar, who was governor of Coelesyria.

The death of Julius Cæsar, which occurred B. C. 44, was a calamity to the Jews scarcely to be estimated, for he had guaranteed them the right of practising their religion unmolested, which privilege was immediately taken from them by Cassius, who had assumed the government of Syria. He not only denied the Jews the right to worship, but imposed a tax of seven hundred talents (about \$1,250,000) upon the country, which could only be paid by taking the larger portion from the Temple, which Antipater did not hesitate to do, and for which act he was assassinated by a priest under Hyrcanus named Malichus. This man was in turn murdered by Herod.

At this period (B. C. 42) Mark Antony is first mentioned as a character in Jewish history. He left Syria at a time when his presence was most needed—if his influence were so powerful—to allay the popular ill-will for Cassius, whose intolerance was quite as rapacious and oppressive to the Syrians as to the Jews. But he had met the beautiful Cleopatra, and in the allurements of her charms neglected all else to repose in the light of her magnetic eyes. At the instigation of the beautiful Egyptian enchantress Antony aspired to the rulership of the world, which at that time was held by a triumvirate. This triple government did not last long, however, for as Antony and his brother-in-law, Octavianus, held the principal possessions and influence, after the battle of Philippi a new assignment of provinces was made, by which Octavianus became master of the West and Antony assumed possession of all the East. By this arbitrary division Octavianus and Antony, of course, became rivals, since the consuming ambition of the time was an extension of power and influence. An open rupture soon took place, precipitated by the well-founded charge of Octavianus that Antony was squandering the revenues

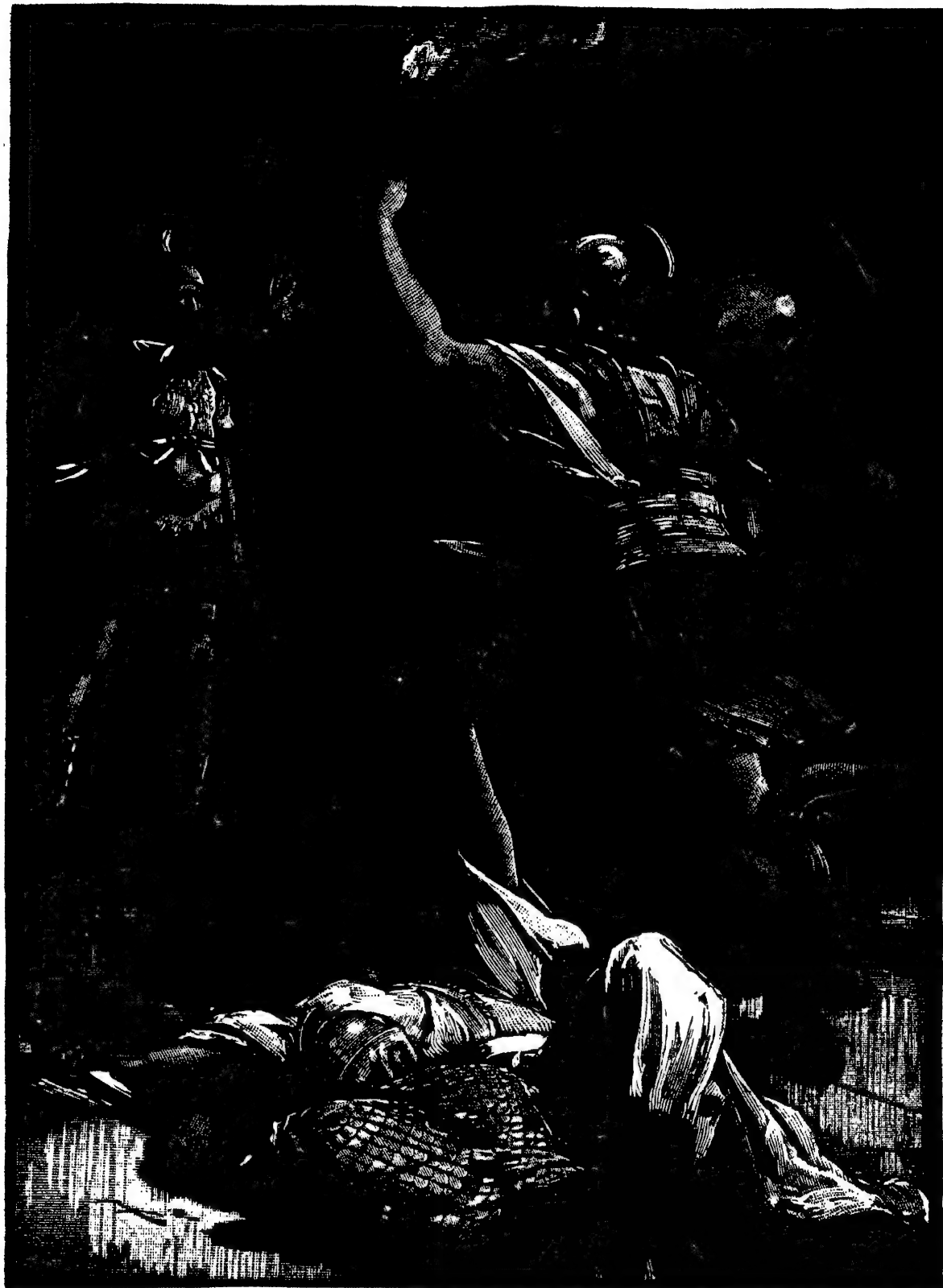
of the East to satisfy the caprices and extravagances of Cleopatra, under whose witchery he became plastic in her hands. This accusation aroused the active hostility of the Egyptian queen, who now influenced Antony to make



MARK ANTONY AT THE BATTLE OF ACTIUM.

his will and deposit it with the vestal virgins, bequeathing all his possessions to her children, by which one of them should become successor to Julius Cæsar. By some means Octavianus obtained possession of this will, and by reading it publicly inflamed the anger of the people against Antony. The Senate soon issued a proclamation of war against Cleopatra, who was charged with subverting the reason of Antony to her overweening ambition. The issues were now joined, and Antony divorced his wife Octavia in order to break the last tie that bound him to Rome. The two hastily brought their large armies into action, and sailed their fleets of war-ships towards the Ambra-cian Gulf. They drew up their squad-

rons off Actium, and the battle began at once with great vigor. In the beginning the fleet of Cleopatra and Antony had some advantage, and would have probably won the battle but for the cowardice of the Egyptian queen who, fearful



HEROD COMMANDING A CESSATION OF THE SLAUGHTER.

of the result, and being in the rear of Antony, drew off quickly, followed by her sixty galleys. Discovering her flight, so great was his infatuation, Antony threw himself into a swift-sailing boat and sped after her. His lieutenants continued the battle for a while, but without avail, and the whole fleet surrendered to the victorious Octavianus. Antony followed Cleopatra back to Egypt, and there renewed his shameful life of abandon and luxury, until he was aroused to action by the invasion of Octavianus, who laid siege to Alexandria. Antony here showed the true spirit of a soldier, and defended the city with rare heroism until a messenger brought him a false report of Cleopatra's death. Without hesitating to await a confirmation of the news he fell upon his sword, but before expiring was carried into the beautiful queen's presence. Almost while watching the glaze of death in her lover's eyes, Cleopatra was seized by the soldiers of Octavianus and carried before their general. Neither her beauty nor art of persuasion could avail her now, but as preparations were being made to carry her to Rome to grace the triumph of Octavianus, one of her attendants contrived to convey to her, in a basket of flowers, an asp, the bite of which is immediately fatal. This reptile she applied to her breast, and thus miserably perished, but avoided a disgrace that would have been more bitter to her imperious nature than any form of death.

While these events were transpiring in Egypt a powerful party in Syria raised an insurrection, and succeeded in forming themselves into an army, and also in gaining the aid of the Parthians under Prince Pacorus. Antigonus, the only surviving son of Aristobulus, by a gift of money equal to nearly \$2,000,000, and five hundred women of noble families, induced the Parthians to give him their assistance in his contest for the throne of Judea. With this force Antigonus laid siege to Jerusalem, during which Herod was driven out of the city, but capitulation of the place was avoided by the submission of Antigonus's claims to the Parthian commander, whose decision could hardly be otherwise than favorable to the claimant.

Antigonus ruled for a period of only three years (B. C. 40-37), when Herod returned with a considerable force, which was further augmented by the aid of Antony, whose troops were placed at his disposal. Herod defeated Antigonus's army in a decisive battle, and then marched against Jerusalem, which he captured after a siege of six months, during which time the inhabitants of the city suffered all the horrors of a famine. Upon its capitulation the Roman soldiers began a slaughter of the now defenceless citizens, which was so remorseless and vengeful that Herod was compelled to restrain the brutal passions of his soldiery, not, however, from a merciful disposition, but to prevent a complete extirpation of the inhabitants, which would have given him possession of a depopulated capital.

The unfortunate Antigonus was taken, and being first loaded with chains was sent to Antony, who, at the instigation of Herod, soon afterward put him to death, and thus expired the last sovereign of the Maccabean house.



THE GLADIATOR'S WIFE.

THE CRUELTY AND RAPACITY OF HEROD.

In many ways Herod greatly resembled the bloody and vengeful Antiochus. He put to death every member of the Sanhedrim, save two, because they had advised against the surrender of Jerusalem; he also instigated the drowning of a high-priest that Cleopatra had forced him to appoint. He did not even withhold his murderous hands from his own household, for upon the bare suspicion of unfaithfulness, probably disloyalty, he killed his beautiful wife Marianne, and soon afterward brought his mother-in-law to a like fate.

To gain the good opinion of his subjects, who despised him with an implacable hatred, Herod instituted the Olympian games in Jerusalem, and popularized gladiatorial combats, fights between wild animals, and other savage amusements; but in addition to this he gave the greatest attention to a rebuilding of the Temple, which had become decayed and unsightly from neglect and abuse. For nine years he kept a force of eighteen hundred artisans at work on the sacred edifice, which on its completion was a marvel of beauty, far surpassing the Temple of Solomon. Nor did he neglect the commercial interests of his empire. A city, with a fine harbor, which in honor of Augustus Cæsar he called *Cæsarea*, was built after the Græco-Roman style of architecture and on a scale of unrivalled splendor, including among its chief features of interest an immense theatre, and amphitheatre for games, besides many exquisite pieces of statuary. In the theatre here constructed, however, he came near being assassinated, the plot upon his life being discovered but a few hours before it was to be executed.

A few years after, or B. C. 7, Herod suspected his two sons, who had been sent to Rome to be educated, of conspiring against his life out of revenge for the murder of their mother, and though there was no evidence of such a conspiracy he ordered the sons home, and upon a false charge had them strangled.

Two other sons still remained to him, and singularly enough, his favorites, One of these, whose name was Antipater, stung to revenge for the triple murder of his mother and two brothers, formed a conspiracy with his half-brother, Pheroras, against Herod, but though their plot was well conceived and they had the active sympathy of seven thousand Pharisees, their plans miscarried. Pheroras was destroyed by poison, while Antipater was brought to trial and condemned, but while awaiting the confirmation of the judgment against him Herod was seized of a dreadful venereal disease, which set him in a frenzy by reason of the boils which covered his body, and, anticipating his death, he ordered that the heads of the chief families of Judea be gathered together in the hippodrome at Jericho, and there be slaughtered, that his own funeral might not be wanting of mourners, and with his last breath he also ordered the execution of Antipater. This was the condition of affairs in Judea at the time of Christ's birth.

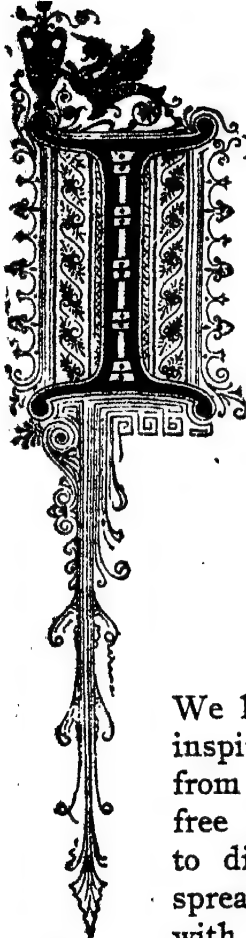


THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

The Four Gospels.



IN the morning of the world, before the ruby portals of the east were opened to admit a golden dawn, there was light from the invisible throne, and beams of refulgence from God's presence, which illuminated all that He had made on the first day of His marvellous work. When the six days were finished the sun, stars, and planets poured their flood of lambent flame over completed creation, and made the world a symphony of harmony and beauty, while bird, flower, landscape, and a twain of mortals offered their oblations in pæans and sweet odors. But—

"Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden,"—

We have already written in following the sacred narrative as the inspired writers were given to record it, wherein is described how from the Divine emanation there sprang beauty and joy until the free agency of him created in the likeness of God wrought sin to disfigure the perfect work of creation. Over the vault where spread the glory of a pleased Omnipotence, which bathed the world with splendor inconceivable, there now rolled the clouds of evil, obscuring the harmony and happiness of all things that were made, until from the celestial birth there developed a mortal doomed to lose his high estate

Till one Greater Man
Restore us and regain the blissful seat.

This restoration was like the breaking of a new day on creation, when the light of the world rose, not in the sky, to pass its brief circuit and sink behind the hills with darkness fast in the wake, but a Sun that should never set nor lose its radiance by opposing cloud; a Light that beats upon the

soul, imparting hope and eternal life, and brings us back to the Fatherhood of God.

This perennial sun of which I speak was the Son of God, about whom we love so much to read because of His mission, character and beautiful life, and because the story of His meekness, suffering and cruel death is so sad that our hearts are awakened with the touch of profound pity and a realization of the love that could prompt the sacrifice He made for our redemption and restoration to the celestial estates set apart for man when God made the world.



BETHLEHEM.

"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem."—LUKE ii. 4.

In closing the Apocrypha and recording the chief events of Herod's reign, I deferred mention of Christ's birth in order to conclude the Old Testament account as given in the narrative, which contains no reference to Jesus, though anticipating occurrences four years subsequent to our Lord's birth. We must, therefore, turn back to view the most important incident that transpired during the rulership of Herod the Great, whose life, from the time he ascended the throne, was a fitful fever. We have seen how he had rebuilt the Temple, in a style more magnificent than Solomon ever dreamed of, and how he turned Palestine into a dependency of Rome, valuable for its commerce no less than

its importance as an adjunct to Roman power. His reign had therefore been of much consequence, both to the people of Palestine, whose condition he somewhat ameliorated, and to Rome, that had now begun a mastery over the world by striking the first victorious blows at Assyria. But though a successful ruler, Herod, as we have already noticed, was an inflexible tyrant, a criminal at heart, and with all his outward show of religious tendency and respect for the Jewish theocracy, he was very much less devoted to the interest of his subjects than to his own ambition, which he sought to attain through pretences that would disguise his real motives. These motives became more apparent in the later years of his dominion and, as a natural consequence, his intrigues and plans were less successful; his popularity rapidly diminished, and being a man of violent disposition, the obstacles which set at defiance his ambitions provoked him to desperate measures that finally brought him to a miserable end.

The prophecies of Isaiah, Zechariah, Daniel and Micah, that a Messiah should be born to redeem the world, were now at the period of fulfilment, and all Israel was looking forward to the promised event. It was therefore a matter of small surprise to Herod when word came to him that a Saviour had been born in Bethlehem who should become King of the Jews. But when he had definitely learned that this promised King was the child of a lowly woman who, too poor to lay her head upon the couch of a sumptuous home, was forced to seek shelter among the beasts of a manger, he gave no credit to the report, since all Israel had expected the Messiah to make His appearance clothed in a glory that would dazzle human eyes, and with a manifestation of power that would prove His heavenly descent. To nearly all Jewry the manner of Christ's coming was a disappointment, which caused many to reject Him and led finally to his crucifixion, as will soon be told.

AN ANGEL APPEARS TO ZACHARIAS.

There were a few persons, however, who, being blessed with the Divine favor, were foretold of the manner and time of Christ's coming, and these proclaimed that the coming of the fulfilment of the prophecies was at hand. The most favored servant of God was Zacharias, who was a priest in the Temple at Jerusalem. He was married to a woman named Elisabeth, who was extremely pious and devoted to good works, but had never borne any children, on which account she was held in small regard by the people, for among the Jews barrenness was regarded with reproach.

At the time of which I write the twenty-four priests who administered in the Temple each day were required to make their offerings as in the time of David, and on each day the service was changed, so that a different company of twenty-four priests went on duty every twelve hours. Their services consisted in trimming the lamps on the golden candlesticks, replenishing the sacred fires, and altar of incense, and offering up a lamb on the altar of burnt-

offerings. At three o'clock of each afternoon the people were summoned to prayer during the burning of incense and offering of the lamb, but each priest had his special duty to perform, both in secret and before the people.

One afternoon Zacharias went into the Holy Place to prepare the offering of burnt incense on the altar, and while engaged in this duty he beheld on a sudden the form of a radiant angel standing beside the altar, as if to stay the service. Zacharias, upon beholding so strange and beautiful a form, with hands stretched above the golden altar, was very much frightened, and would have hastened from the celestial presence had he not been restrained by a sweet voice that spoke, and declared to him that though he and his wife were old, yet Elisabeth should soon bear him a son, whose name would be John. More-



THE ANGEL GABRIEL SPEAKING TO ZACHARIAS.

over, the angel said that this son would never pollute his lips with strong drink, but that his conduct would ever be that of a pious person, in whom the Spirit of God would be manifest from the day of his birth. This prophecy filled the heart of Zacharias with pleasure, but the angel had better news yet to tell, for continuing his speech he told the enraptured priest that John would proclaim to the people the time when the Saviour of the world should come, and that he would also preach repentance of sin and preparation for receiving the Lord.

Although Zacharias was happy in hearing such a pleasing prophecy, yet he desired some sign of the fulfilment of what had been spoken, and therefore asked that it might be

given him to know how such things should come to pass. Perceiving his doubts, the angel answered: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."

When the angel had thus spoken he disappeared, leaving Zacharias speechless, but glad in heart, for by this sign he perceived truly that what had been told him proceeded from God. When he came out of the Temple to the people who were waiting, he could only make them understand by signs what manner of vision he had beheld, and why he had been so long detained, for his tongue had become useless in his mouth.

GABRIEL APPEARS TO MARY.

In less than six months after the annunciation to Zacharias, Gabriel became a second time the messenger of God, to proclaim a glorious birth, and accordingly he appeared before a young woman of Nazareth called Mary, a cousin to Elisabeth, and who was espoused at the time to a poor carpenter named Joseph, who was a descendant of David, as was Mary also.

When Mary beheld the angel Gabriel standing before her, she, like Zach-



THE ANNUNCIATION.

"The Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."—LUKE i. 28.

arias had been, was much frightened, not understanding the import of the celestial visitor, but she was speedily reassured by the angel, who spoke these joyful tidings: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God, and behold, thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Mary, however, was no less doubtful of the truth of Gabriel's prophecy than Zacharias had been, and being anxious for some proof, inquired, "How

shall this be?" for she was not yet married. Whereupon the angel responded, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." He also told her how that Elisabeth should soon bear a son, notwithstanding her old age, which delighted Mary and caused her to desire greatly to see her cousin, to tell what had been prophesied and to learn if it were as the angel had told concerning her. Accordingly, Mary left Nazareth and went quickly to a small town in Judah, near Jerusalem, where Elisabeth was sojourning, to visit her cousin, with whom she remained nearly three months. It is left to us only to imagine how these two women, so highly favored of God, spent their time together, since unfortunately, neither Matthew, Mark, Luke nor John left any description of the joy which must have been manifested every day by these blessed women, who

were now experiencing the rapture which fills the mother's heart with every pulsation of her first-born, a hundred-fold intensified by the unutterable joy which must have sprung from the glad promises of Gabriel.



HIS NAME IS JOHN.

THE BIRTH OF JOHN.

For reasons which the Bible does not give us to know, Mary returned to Nazareth before the birth of Elisabeth's child, though the event must have been expected near the time of her departure. But we are

told that upon Mary's return the prophecy which the angel had made to her cousin was fulfilled, for Elisabeth bore a son, who, in accordance with the custom of the Jewish people of that time, was called Zacharias, after his father. The mother, however, insisted upon naming him John, which matter being thus brought into dispute, was determined by referring it to the priest father. Zacharias was yet speechless, and had to make his desires known by signs, so in this way he called for writing materials, which being given him he wrote the name—John. Instantly the seal of his tongue was broken and he broke forth in praise-giving for the mercies and favors which God had bestowed upon him. The curious manner in which his speech was restored, no less than that by which he had been stricken dumb, awakened the keenest surprise of the people, who manifested their mysticism by inquiring, referring to the babe, "What manner of child shall this be?"

The question asked concerning the future of John was answered in due time. Of his childhood we know nothing except that he "waxed strong in spirit," by which we may infer that he was a very healthy, and possibly precocious child. As he grew to manhood's estate he refused to be bound by the ordinary pursuits of his people, but retired to the desert, where, after a period of contemplation and preparation, he began to preach as a forerunner of Christ that salvation was at hand.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

Soon after Mary's return to Nazareth, which was near the time when she was to be married—and no doubt, this engagement was that which caused her to terminate her visit to Elisabeth at so critical and yet auspicious a time—Joseph discovered the evidences of maternity in his betrothed, and secretly sought a pretext to withdraw his vows without making public the cause. But God came to him in a dream and told how blessed among women Mary was, and that the child was conceived by the Holy Ghost while she was yet a virgin. So Joseph and Mary were married.

A few months after the marriage of Joseph and Mary, at Nazareth, they were compelled to make a journey to Bethlehem, eighty miles distant, in obedience to the Roman law which required every man to enroll his name in the city where his father had lived. This law was passed to enable the government at Rome to take a census of the male population of Palestine, so that in case of war it might be known how to make a levy for troops from that country. Another purpose of this registration was to fix the taxing of the nation, each man being required to make a return of his possessions; and hence it was that Joseph, who was of the house of David, was required to make the journey to Bethlehem. When the two reached their destination they found all the inns full, so that they had to take shelter in a small private house where the accommodations were meagre, but perhaps quite as good as either Joseph or Mary were used to, for they had always been extremely poor. How long the two remained in Bethlehem we do not know, but during their visit to the place Mary gave birth to the blessed Child, to whom, as the angel had declared, was given the name JESUS, which signifies *Saviour*, and CHRIST, the *Anointed*.

The small dwelling wherein they lodged afforded so little privacy or convenience that Mary laid her precious babe in a manger, which was doubtless connected with the family abode, as was customary among the people of all that region of Judah. Tradition tells us that this so-called manger was a cave scooped out of the limestone rock, a common thing about Bethlehem. Beecher, in his "Life of Christ," says such caves abound in the limestone rock of that region, and are used both for sheltering herds and sometimes for human residences. The precipitous sides of the rock are often pierced in such a way that a cottage built near might easily convert an adjoining cave to the use of

an outbuilding. "Caves are not rare in Palestine, as with us. On the contrary, the whole land seems honeycombed with them. They are, and have been for ages, used for almost every purpose which architecture supplies in other lands—as dwellings for the living and sepulchres for the dead, as shelter for the household and for cattle and herds, as hidden retreats for robbers, and as defensive positions or rock castles for soldiers. Travellers make them a refuge when no better inn is at hand. They are shaped into reservoirs for

water, or, if dry, they are employed as granaries. The limestone of the region is so porous and soft that but a little labor is required to enlarge, refashion, and adapt such caves to any desirable purpose."

In Thompson's "Land and the Book," I find the following description of the cave-habitations about Bethlehem: "It is common to find two sides of the one room, where the native farmer resides with his cattle, fitted up with these mangers, and the remainder elevated about two feet higher for the accommodation of the family. The mangers are built of small stones and mortar, in the shape of a box, or rather of a kneading-trough, and when cleaned up and white-washed, as they often are in summer, they do very well to lay little babes in. Indeed, our own children have slept there in our rude summer retreats on the mountains."



JOSEPH AND MARY ARRIVE AT THE INN.

In view of these facts we have no warrant for believing that Joseph and Mary were so distressed by poverty that they were forced to lay their babe in a manger given over entirely to the shelter of cattle, nor that the child Jesus was subjected to any greater hardship than was common to the peasant children of that region.

Bethlehem, the place chosen by God for the nativity, as foretold by

Micah, lies five miles south of Jerusalem, on a spur of the hills of Judah. To the east spreads a softly undulating plain upon which grass grows abundantly, and upon which, most probably, the shepherds were grazing their flocks when apprised by the angels of the birth of Jesus. Small as the town was, it had long before been famous as the birthplace of David, and about the valleys and plains of which he had attended his father's herds before being crowned king of Israel. About this sacred place also attaches a holy feeling, because it was here that Ruth gleaned and Boaz won her from unfeeling relatives for his wife.

The date of Christ's birth, though unimportant so far as it affects His mission or character, has been the subject of much discussion among commentators for hundreds of years. "In the primitive church," as Dr. Schaff observes, "there was no agreement as to the time of Christ's birth. In the East the 6th of January was the day observed for His baptism and birth. In the third century, as Clement of Alexandria relates, some regarded the 20th of May, others the 20th of April as the date. Among modern chronologists, and biographers of Jesus, there is still great difference of opinion, and every month—even June and July (when the fields are parched from want of rain)—has been named as the time when the great event took place. Lightfoot assigns the nativity to September; Lardner and Newcomb to October; Wieseler to February; Paulus to March; Greswell and Alfera to the 5th of April, just after the spring rains, when there is an abundance of pasture; Lichtenstein places it in July or December; Strong in August; Robinson in autumn; Clinton in spring; Andrews between the middle of December, 749 and the middle of January, 750 (after the founding of Rome). On the other hand, Roman Catholic historians and biographers of Jesus, as Lepp, Friedlieb, Bucher, Patricius, and also some Protestant writers, defend the popular tradition—the 25th of December. Wordsworth gives up the problem, and thinks that the Holy Spirit has concealed the knowledge of the year and day of Christ's birth and the duration of His ministry from the wise and prudent, to teach them humility.

AN ANGEL ANNOUNCES THE GLAD TIDINGS.

Although born to the poorest and cradled in a manger, the glory of God shone round the Babe, while angels sped on swiftest wing to bear the glad tidings of Christ's birth to the world. They did not go to kingly halls, but visited the lowly shepherds minding their flocks in the still watches of night on the plains where David watched when he was called to be king of Israel, and to them declared the "good tidings of great joy to all the people." How startled must have been the sleepy shepherds when, aroused from their half-watching, they perceived a light breaking through the darkness and heard angelic voices proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." Their fear soon subsided, however, when an angel told them that in Bethlehem had that day been born "a Saviour, which is Christ the

Lord," and that they might find him then wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Convinced of the truth of what they had heard by the miraculous manner in which the news was given, the now thoroughly aroused and excited shepherds made haste to Bethlehem, where they found the new-born



SHEPHERDS KEPT THEIR FLOCKS BY NIGHT."

Babe as had been declared, and immediately joined their praises to God for His mercies and the gift of a Redeemer.

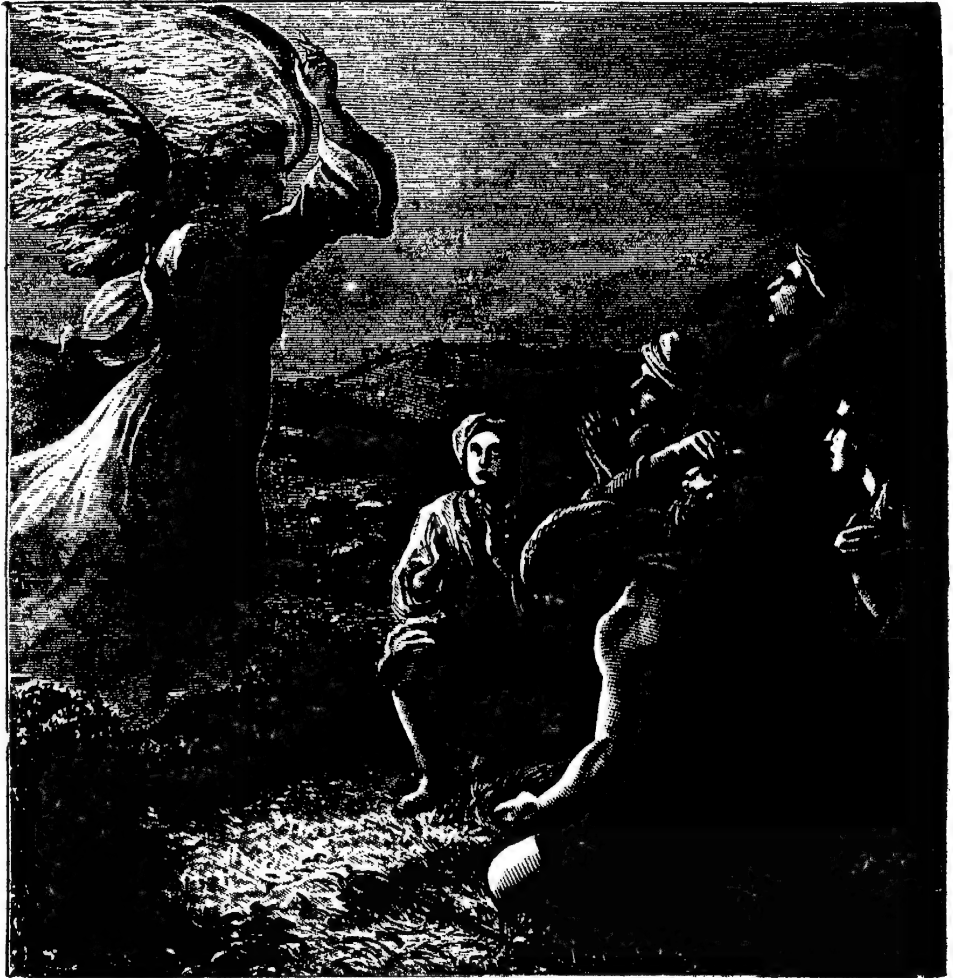
THE CIRCUMCISION AND NAMING OF CHRIST.

Since Christ was "born of woman," and "under the law," on the eighth day after His birth He was brought by His parents to the priest in Bethlehem for circumcision, and upon the performance of this ceremony He was given the name JESUS, as the Angel Gabriel had commanded.

The Jewish law relating to births was not fully complied with by the observance of circumcision, for it was necessary for each mother to offer up a sacrifice at the expiration of her period of purification, which was at the end of forty days after the birth. According to this requirement Mary and took the precious Babe to Jerusalem, and in the Temple there made

their sacrifice of "a pair of turtle doves," which was the customary offering of the poorest people.

This first appearance of Jesus in the Temple was the signal for His reception by those who may be regarded as the representatives of the spiritual remnant of Israel. An aged man and woman had long watched, with prophetic spirit, for the dawn of the Sun of Righteousness. Simeon, who had been forewarned by the Holy Spirit that he should not die till he had seen the "Anointed of Jehovah," was now guided by the same Spirit into the Temple; and, taking the child in his arms, he proclaimed Him, for the first time, as the CHRIST OF GOD, and declared that, for himself, the time was come to depart in peace, since his eyes had seen the Salvation of God, the Light of the Gentiles, and the Glory of Israel. But his prophecy was not ended; for, as Joseph and Mary wondered at his words, he announced the varied reception which Christ



"THERE IS BORN A SAVIOUR WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD!"

would meet from His own people, the trial of the inmost hearts of men by His Spirit, and the sorrows which, in striking at Him, would smite through His mother's heart—the primal curse and blessing on the woman. Simeon had scarcely ceased, when Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, entered the sacred court. This devout woman had employed her widowhood of eighty-four years, after a marriage of only seven, in constant prayer and fasting within the precincts of the Temple. She was a prophetess;

and in that character she now gave thanks to God for the advent of the Christ, and repeated her testimony to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Though only forty days had expired since the birth of Jesus, yet the glad news had travelled on the wings of morning and night from one end of Palestine to another, and even to the far distant east, where a people lived who had never come in contact with the Jews, but who, learning that a Saviour of the world had been born, came to pay homage to Him who, it had been declared, should be "King of kings." Accordingly, there came "wise men from the east," who were doubtless Magians, as these were frequently called, and, being guided by a star, they journeyed to Jerusalem, inquiring where the young Child, who was to be King of the Jews, was, that they might worship Him.

Herod the Great, who was still living at this time, had no doubt heard the report, common throughout all Judea, that a Saviour had been born, but attributed the belief in such an event to the superstitious character of some of his subjects, and gave the matter no attention until he learned that wise men from the east had come to Jerusalem in quest of that Saviour whom they called "King of the Jews." Upon learning that this wonderful babe should become king, he immediately conceived the idea that he was himself to be supplanted, and began to concert means to destroy the child.

At this time Herod was unpopular with the people, and had several times nearly lost his kingdom and his life through conspiracies headed by his own sons, as already described; besides these narrow escapes, which constantly harassed his mind with dreadful forebodings, he was afflicted with a painful and incurable malady, which rendered him more susceptible to evil reports, and the more ready to believe that every public rumor affecting his government was the result of some conspiracy to wrest the sceptre from him.

Herod accordingly summoned the Sanhedrim, and from the sages of that body learned that the Redeemer should be born in Bethlehem, and that the time of His birth, as fixed by the prophets, was near at hand. He thereupon called the Magians, and requested them to proceed in search of the new-born King, and when they should find Him to come and tell him, that he might worship Him also.

Who these wise men, or Magians, were, it is even difficult to conjecture. Tradition still preserved among the Jews represents them as three astrologers, named Balthazar, Melchior and Casper, from Assyria, whose skulls are preserved and shown in a shrine at Cologne. This tradition is, of course, unreliable, and has no basis of truth to rest upon. Of one fact only are we assured, that whether kings, astrologers, or "wise men," they were unquestionably persons of great wealth and much learning, proved by the gifts they brought to the child, "gold, frankincense and myrrh," which were the gifts customary to be made by subject nations to their kings or conquerors.

HEROD MURDERS THE CHILDREN OF BETHLEHEM.

When the "wise men" went on their way again from Jerusalem, they beheld the star still brightly shining, by which they were guided to Bethlehem until it stood still over the young child and thus discovered Him to them. When they had presented their treasures and paid due homage to the child Christ, they would no doubt have returned to Jerusalem to inform Herod of the place where Jesus was, but were forewarned by God in a dream not to go to the king, but to return to their country by another way, which they accordingly did. When Herod learned that the "wise men" had departed from his realm without obeying his injunction, his fears were the more excited, and he resolved upon a most horrible measure to accomplish the destruction of Jesus, whom he now regarded as the successor to his kingdom if permitted to live. Having caused the murder of his wife and sons, out of suspicion that they had conspired to dethrone him, he was not likely to stop short of any crime that promised to relieve his mind of the fears excited by the report that a new king of the Jews had been born, and accordingly he issued an order for the extermination of every male child under two years of age within Bethlehem and adjoining district. In pursuance of this dreadful edict several hundred innocent babes were foully murdered and the whole land thrown into mourning. In this terrible scene the Jews saw a fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy of Rachel, whose tomb was near Bethlehem, weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not.

THE ESCAPE OF JESUS.

How vain of man to suppose that he can set aside God's will and compass his own desires in opposition to that of his Creator. In this Herod was more than vain and foolish, and by his wickedness only hastened his own miserable end. God, knowing the heart of Herod, sent an angel to Joseph directing him to take Jesus and Mary and flee into Egypt, and there remain until the death of Herod, and until he could return with the child to his own country without fear. Thus did Jesus escape, through God's intercession, the terrible slaughter of infants. But Herod's end was near, and in the same year, almost directly after the Feast of the Passover, he rendered up his crime-laden life and went thither to answer for his iniquities. Immediately after an angel again appeared to Joseph in a dream, and bade him return to Palestine. While on the journey to Bethlehem, however, Joseph learned that the son of Herod, Archelaus, had ascended the throne, and that this new king was no better than his father, who, to perpetuate his power, would likely murder Jesus if he should discover the Child. Joseph, therefore, turned aside from Galilee and went to Nazareth, the former home of Mary, which lay sixty-five miles north of Jerusalem. Here Jesus lived with his father in obscurity, so far as history gives us to know, he was twelve years of age. We are only told that "the Child grew,

and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." It is clear from the next event recorded in His history, that these words imply not only a growth in moral and spiritual excellence, but a conscious preparation for His ministry by communion with His divine Father and by diligent study of the Scriptures. His public ministry did not begin with a sudden impulse, but was prepared for by His whole life. The consciousness of His divine nature and power grew and ripened and strengthened until the time of His showing unto Israel. The very silence of the evangelists, however, leads to some important inferences respecting our Saviour's training in boyhood and in youth. As Neander has observed: "His education for a teacher was not due to any of the theological schools then existing in Judea;" and thus was He the better prepared to stand forth, in perfect independence, as the antagonist and rebuker alike of the dead ritualism and hypocritical casuistry of the Pharisees and Scribes, and the negative coldness of the Sadducees. And while the rigid purity which He taught might suggest something of an outward resemblance to the Essenes, He had no real connection with that ascetic body, to deaden his sympathies with humanity at large. Herein was the contrast with his forerunner, which he himself traces: "John came neither eating nor drinking: the Son of Man came eating and drinking."

JESUS IS FOUND DISPUTING WITH THE DOCTORS.

Ever since the captivity, the great festivals, like other institutions of the law, had been observed with regularity, and even the women went up to Jerusalem once a year to keep the Passover. Such was the custom of our Saviour's parents, and when He reached the age of twelve, He accompanied them to the feast. When Joseph and Mary left Jerusalem He remained behind, His absence being only discovered after the caravan had gone a day's journey. His sorrowing parents found Him in the Temple, the centre of a circle of the professed teachers of the law, astonishing all who heard Him, both by His replies to them and by His own questions. There is nothing here to imply a contentious spirit; but, in the sincere effort to obtain instruction, He could not but show the fruits of His profound study of the Scriptures, and the power of the Spirit that had "filled Him with wisdom." This "spiritual discernment," by which He opened the true meaning of God's Word, was the "understanding" which astonished the "natural men," who had long been bound down to the mere letter.

Though the town of Nazareth was a small place it afforded Jesus opportunities for studying the Scriptures free from the bias and preconceived opinions of the teachers at Jerusalem. It was here that He not only studied the Scriptures, but studied human nature as well. Nazareth was, though only a village, a place whose chief reputation was the disrepute in which its people were held. This is proved by the inquiry of Nathanael, of Cana, a place near by, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" The proof of Nazareth's wickedness

is further increased by the manner in which Christ was received when He first preached there, for we are told that as He discoursed to the people plainly of their misdoings they offered Him personal violence.

There were some things, however, about Nazareth, which were favorable to the acquisition, by Jesus, of those principles which, unknown to the Jewish priests, became to Him so serviceable in the propagation of His teachings.



"AND ALL THAT HEARD HIM WERE ASTONISHED AT HIS UNDERSTANDING."

These favorable conditions arose from the natural beauties of the place, which seem to have brought His mind into a more perfect accord with God, even if we choose to regard Jesus, at the time, as a person with no more of the Divine attributes than His fellows possessed. Of the exquisite beauty of Nazareth and the surrounding district the Rev. Dr. Stanley, a missionary to Palestine, writes: "Fifteen gently rounded hills seem as if they had met to form an

inclosure for this peaceful basin. They rise round it like the edge of a shell, to guard it from intrusion. It is a rich and beautiful field in the midst of these green hills, abounding in gay flowers, in fig trees, small gardens and hedges of the prickly pear."

The town is built, not upon the apex of a hill, but rather upon the side which slopes westerly toward the basin. From this hill a view is had unequalled in all Palestine; not even from Mount Tabor is such a grand sight afforded, for we may here behold almost the whole of Galilee, the northern portion of which is covered with snow lying on the high mountains and reflecting back the sun's rays like peaks of silver, while away to the west and southwest sweeps the Mediterranean in full view. But nobler still is the plain of Esdraelon (which takes its name from Jezreel), which stretches its length fifteen miles from the valley at the base of Nazareth. Beautiful as the scenery is, it is the historical events associated with each hill and plain of the vicinity that give to the place its chiefest charm. On the plains of Jezreel rushed the tide of battle in the patriarchal age. Here the hosts of Midianites, Amalekites, Syrians, and Philistines went forth to battle against Judah and made it the battlefield of ages. Is it a matter of wonder, therefore, that in a mind so receptive as Christ's must have been, He drank so deeply from the cup of nature; that He was so familiar with the history of His people and



JESUS THE CARPENTER'S SON.

with the history of His people and

with the law, or that he thrived upon the inspiration which placed Him in communion with God?

But of the boyhood of Jesus we know nothing, beyond the fact that he was a carpenter's son, who doubtless helped His father, after the manner of Jewish sons who were brought up to learn a trade. We may picture Him in our minds as doing wonders in His infancy, and of being radiantly beautiful as well as divinely good, but we must trust entirely to our imagination, for on these matters the Gospels are silent. So, after we find Him at the age of twelve years, sitting in the midst of the doctors and disputing with them, history affords no other glimpse of Him for a period of eighteen years, when, now thirty years of age, He sets out upon His ministry. All that is said of Him, to cover this long interval, is contained in the Gospel of St. Luke, who writes that while Jesus was conversing with the doctors His mother came to seek Him,

saying: "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."

"And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business? And they understood not the saying which He spoke unto them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them; but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

The Gospels are quite as reticent concerning the boyhood of John as they are of Jesus. We are merely told of the manner of John's birth, and the prophecy of what he should do as the forerunner of the Saviour, and that at an early age he retired into the wilderness about Engedi. It was common in those days, and even later, for those who desired to prepare themselves for a religious life, to withdraw for a time into the desert and there live in strict seclusion from the world, in meditation upon the goodness and nature of God. And this is what John did for a period of perhaps fifteen or more years. During this time he subsisted upon the wild honey that he found stored by bees in the rocks and dwarfed trees of the wilderness, and upon the locusts, or grasshoppers, which abounded in that region.

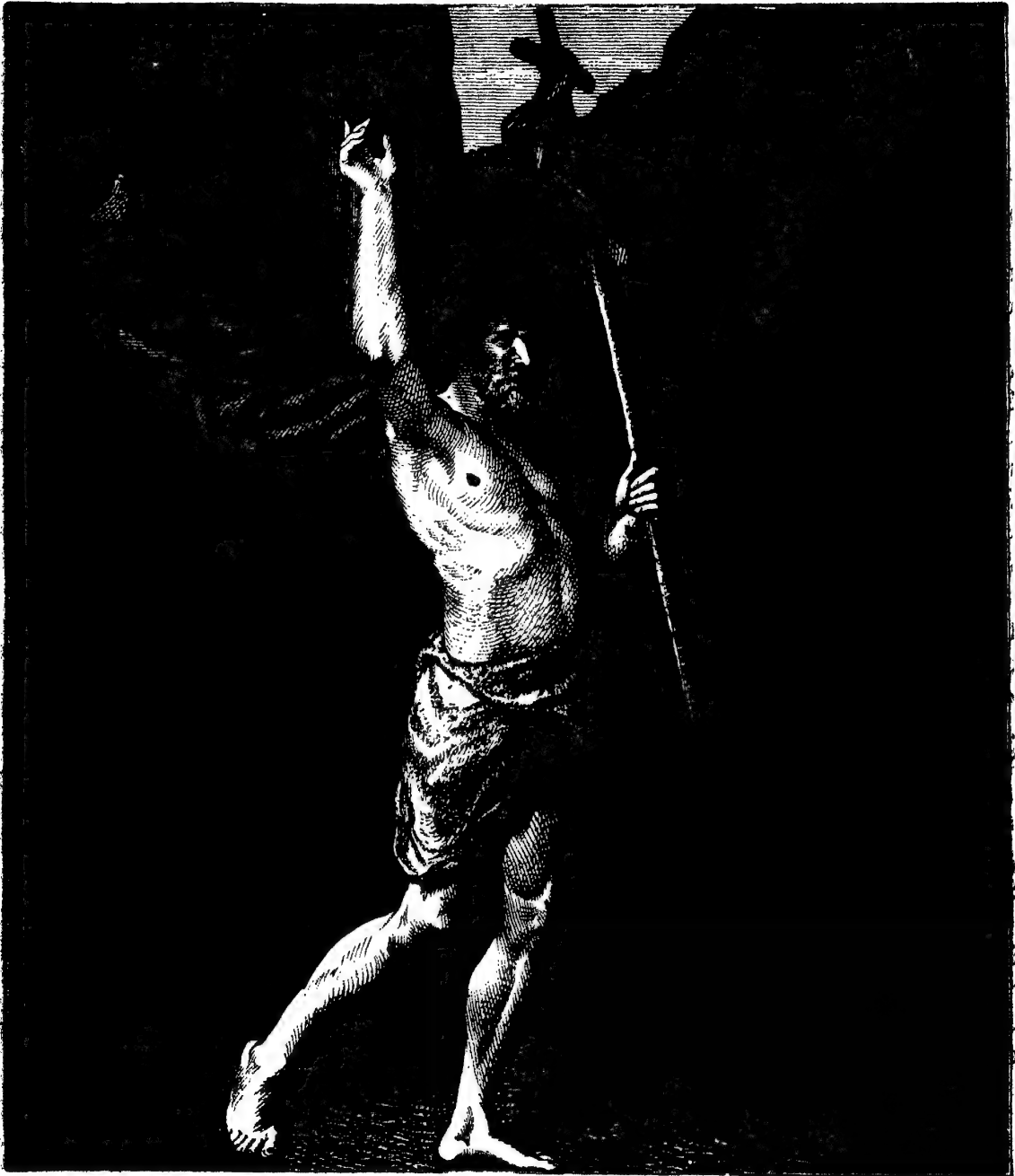
At the withdrawal of John from a life of seclusion he found a sorry condition of affairs in Judah. The Jews had no longer any voice in the government, being now ruled by a Roman procurator, named Pontius Pilate, under the prefect of Syria. The people were bitterly oppressed by publicans, who were collectors of the revenue, and who placed the most burdensome exactions upon the Jews, amounting almost to a confiscation of their possessions. These levies were not paid without much complaint, and the murmurs of rebellion became audible, which at length gave rise to an organization under Judas for actively opposing the payment of further tribute to Augustus Cæsar, who was now Emperor of Rome.

Besides the dissatisfaction, well founded, which the Jews felt at the burdens laid upon them by Rome, they were torn by dissensions among themselves, produced, however, by Roman interference with the priesthood, which was frequently changed to prevent a consolidation of the Jews, whose tribal relations were thus made to change with each change of the priesthood.

JOHN DECLARES THE COMING OF CHRIST.

It was while these dissensions and conspiracies were most threatening that the Spirit of God called John from his seclusion and sent him through Judea to preach the coming of Christ. Though making no claim to the possession of miraculous powers, he assumed the garb of a prophet—"a raiment of camel's hair and a girdle about his loins"—and in other respects, as well as by his preaching, he seems to have sought to imitate Elijah. His first declar-

ation to the people, who were expecting a forerunner of the Messiah, according to the prophecies of Isaiah, was to disguise his personality—"I am the



"REPENT YE, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND."

ice of one crying in the wilderness; 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' saith the prophet Esaias." Even Jesus seems to have sought to confirm of the identity between the two, for while addressing the people

on one occasion, referring to John, He said: "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." Here Elijah is called Elias, the name having been changed in the Septuagint version, and by this declaration there were many who were made to believe that John was the reincarnated Elijah, whose coming had long been looked forward to. His preaching, therefore, became, as St. Mark declares, "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

John's appearance and manner of addressing the people immediately gained for him a very large following. Multitudes flocked to hear him from all parts of Judea, where his fame had spread. Besides preaching the doctrine of repentance, he instituted the ceremony of baptism as an outward sign of the beginning of a new life. Specifically, he besought the publicans to practise honesty and generosity, and the selfish he exhorted to share their abundance with the poor. The soldiers, too, were advised to guard the rights of all, and to have regard for the lowly who were suffering from oppressions. The Pharisees and Sadducees, who set themselves up as examples of that righteousness inherited from Abraham, were roundly denounced as "a generation of vipers," and were warned that God could raise up true children to Abraham from the very stones of the desert. More than this, he declared the two sects no better than barren trees, fit only to be cut down and cast into the fire, and that they would be thus dealt with unless they "brought forth fruit meet for repentance," before the coming of the Messiah.

To these exhortations the two stubborn sects gave little heed, but the publicans and mass of the people accepted the warnings of John and came to him in great numbers to be baptized, by which ceremony they made a public acknowledgment of their sins, and in repentance sought to establish a covenant with God. Thus did he preach and baptize for a period of six months, until Jesus, having attained the Levitical age of thirty years, and thus become eligible to the priestly ministry, came out of His retirement to be Himself baptized.

JOHN BAPTIZES CHRIST.

When Jesus besought John to administer to Him the rite of baptism, the latter opposed the wish by saying: "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" But to this Christ replied: "Suffer it now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." The answer carries with it a satisfactory explanation of the need of such an initiatory rite, which was given as a sign to the people that those who truly repented of their sins should give some public proof that would partake of the nature of an obligation. Christ, though a man without sin, and therefore having no need for the rite, so far as it affected His character or conscience, desired baptism in order that He might fulfil all the conditions common to man. Having been born in the flesh, He was made subject to all the natural laws, and He felt it to be as much his duty to "condemn sin in the flesh," by renouncing it through the water of baptism, as by expiating it by His blood upon the cross; and so He set the

example of entrance into His kingdom by the path of meek repentance, and of solemn obligation to a holy life. His conscience, free from all sense of guilt, must have felt it hard to descend into the water; but this first suffering had its reward in the glory that at once followed. This first act of submission to His Father's will called forth the first public tokens of His Father's acceptance of the sacrifice, and approving love toward Himself. As He stepped past the water's edge, He knelt down to pray, devoting His whole being to the work to which He had been consecrated by His baptism. At that moment a double sign was vouchsafed from heaven to the eyes and ears of the multitude, among whom Jesus had hitherto appeared as one of themselves. The sky was seen to open, and the Spirit of God descended upon Him in a bodily shape, like a dove, and a voice was heard from heaven saying, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The former act was another baptism, which exceeded the commission of John, endowing Jesus with the power of God, and was given to Him to be conferred in turn upon His disciples.

By this baptism Jesus was lifted above the conditions to which mankind are subject, and He immediately enters a new sphere, where the Divine attributes begin to appear. Henceforth He becomes a teacher, and in His walks now displays the Divine presence. It is upon the banks of the Jordan, on that blessed day when, as a man, Jesus underwent the rite of baptism, that He emerged from the waves **THE CHRIST**, to declare a new dispensation.

THE FORTY DAYS' FAST AND TEMPTATION.

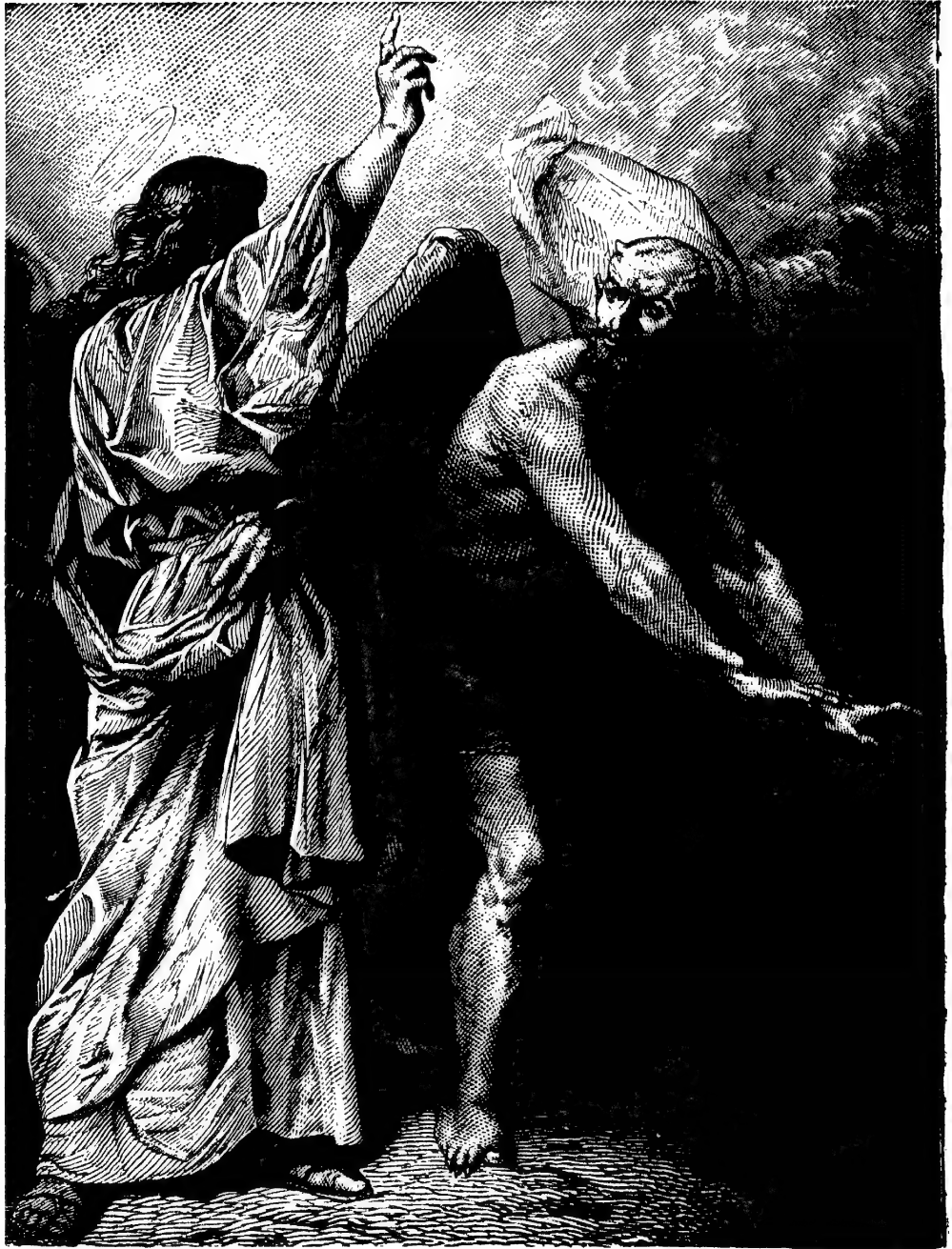
Christ did not at once proceed upon His mission to redeem the world, but was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for a period of forty days He fasted, and was no doubt in communion with God. Was it an ordeal of suffering that He was compelled to undergo as a trial of faith? Impossible, for He was without sin and of the Godhead. This retirement of forty days is identical with that of Moses upon Sinai, and of Elijah at Horeb, and was a withdrawal from man into the presence of God, which Christ did not only at the beginning of His ministry, but also at its conclusion, when he sought the solitude of the garden at Gethsemane, and poured out His great soul to the heavenly Father.

After the period of forty days was past Christ became hungry, when the Devil came to tempt Him to make a display of the power that had been given Him, possibly to discover what power had been bestowed. Accordingly, Satan said to Him: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." But Jesus perceived wherein the temptation lay and wisely answered, "Man shall not live by bread alone."

This request made of Jesus by the Devil reminds us at once of the temptations which so often overcame the children of Israel in their journey out of Egypt, and leads us to suspect that Satan remembered the weaknesses of the Jews whenever assailed by tribulation, and believed that Jesus would as easily

succumb to temptation. Though disappointed in his first effort, Satan was not discouraged in his belief that he might yet humble Christ, so taking Him up to a pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem, said: "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up."

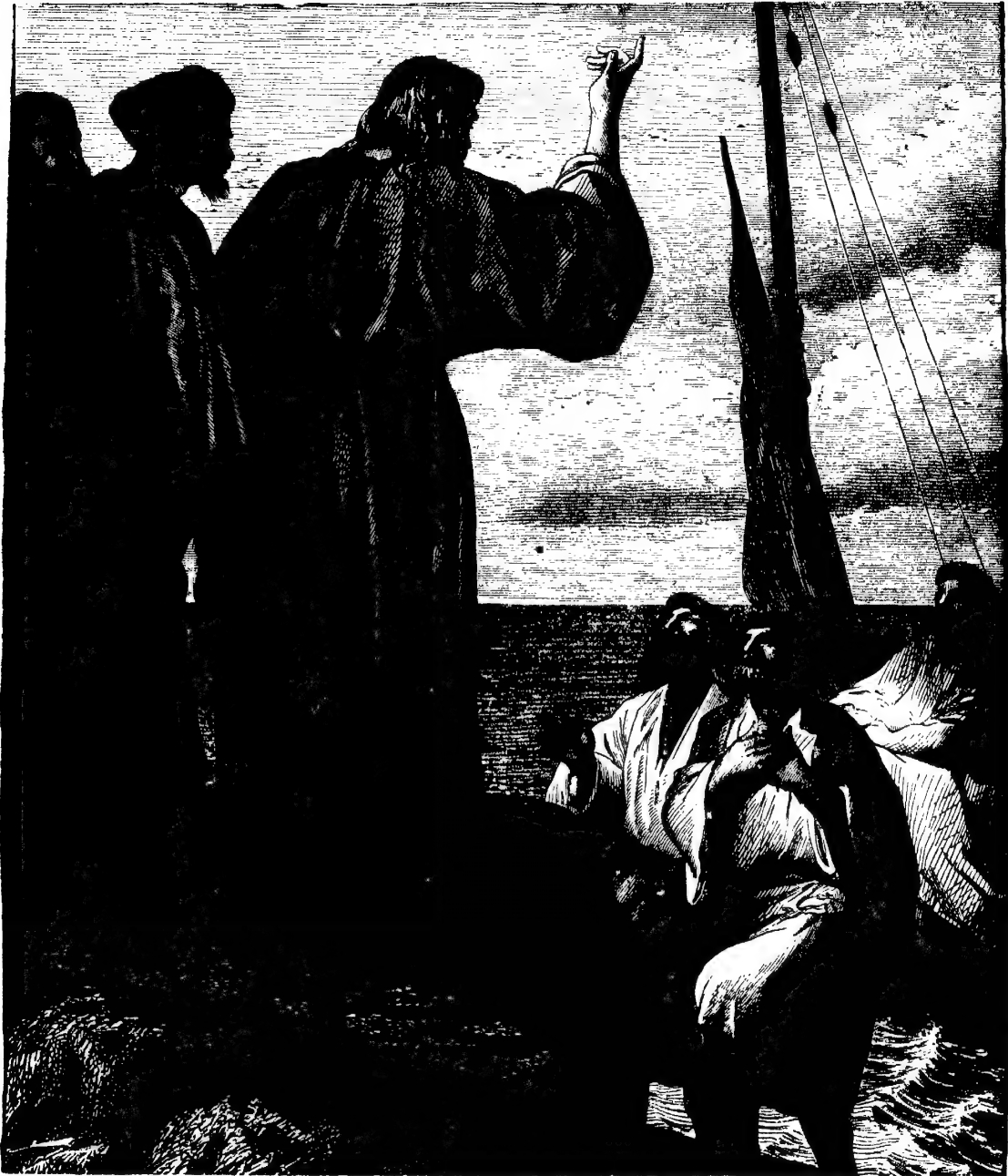
But to this Jesus answered: "It is written again, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'" But the Devil would try once more to convict Christ of worldly aspirations, by appealing to His ambition and vanity, so he took Him to the summit of a high mountain, possibly the peak of Quarantania, where numerous wild beasts



"GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN."

made their lairs, as they do to this day, and from this lofty eminence showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, all of which he promised to give Jesus if He would fall down and worship him. But again

triumphant over this last and most potent temptation in seducing human nature, Christ answers: "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship



JAMES AND JOHN ARE CALLED.

"And going on from thence, he saw two other brethren, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, in a ship with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets, and he called them."—MATT. iv. 21.

the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Vanquished by the invincible faith of Jesus, Satan left Him, whereupon angels descended and

ministered to the Holy One, who now entered upon the mission which he was sent to perform.

JOHN DECLARES JESUS THE MESSIAH.

During the time of Christ's disappearance in the wilderness, John continued to preach, as before, of the Messiah, who was now come, until the rulers of Jerusalem, having heard of the wonders manifested at the baptism of Jesus, sent priests to make inquiries of John concerning Him. These Levites accordingly came to John and asked, "Art thou the Christ?" "Art thou Elias?" "Art thou the prophet?" To all of which John replied that one greater than himself had come, "the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose," who would baptize with fire. While John was thus making answer to those who questioned him, from day to day, Jesus reappeared among the multitude, whereupon, in a burst of joyful enthusiasm, John exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." He also repeated to the people how it had been manifested at His baptism that Jesus was the Christ.

On the following day, as John was standing with two of his friends, or disciples, Jesus passed by, whereupon John again exclaimed, as before, "Behold the Lamb of God." These two believed on the Lord and immediately followed Him and became His disciples, being the first conversions to Christ. On the same day Simon, the brother of Andrew, was called, to whom Jesus gave the name of Cephas, meaning a *stone*. One day later, Philip, from Bethsaida, which was the dwelling place of Andrew and Peter, became also a disciple of Jesus, and these induced Nathanael, of the vicinity of Nazareth, to come and see Jesus. Nathanael was doubtful of the things that had been told him, but upon coming into the presence of Jesus he was convinced, by the Lord telling him that "before Philip called, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." Nathanael was thus made to believe, because he knew that, being at the time a remote distance from Jesus, He could only know of the circumstances of the call by the Divine power that had been given Him. Perceiving him thus easily convinced, Jesus said to him, "Because I said unto thee, 'I saw thee under the fig-tree' believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these."

THE FIRST MIRACLE.

On the third day after Jesus had returned from the wilderness there was a marriage in Cana, a small town of Galilee, to which He and His four disciples and also His mother were invited. Those who were to be joined in wedlock were evidently very poor, and unable to provide such a feast as was commonly spread at celebrations of this kind in Judea. Wine was regarded as an almost indispensable adjunct of such an event, and it was therefore a natural thing for the guests, who doubtless were not entirely acquainted with the poverty of the bride's friends, to call for wine with which to drink the health of the bride and groom. To this request Mary replied, addressing Jesus, that no wine had been provided, but turning to the servants she bade them do whatsoever her

Son wished. In obedience to His command, therefore, the servants brought six earthen water-pots, which would hold about twenty gallons each, and these they filled with water to the brim. When this was done Jesus bade them to draw measures thereof and bear them to the governor of the feast. When the governor had tasted of the liquid that was thus brought he found it to be such excellent wine that he called the bridegroom and said: "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now," but he did not know that the good wine which had been given himself and the guests to drink, had, only a few minutes before, been pure water. But the disciples, and



THE FIRST MIRACLE—TURNING WATER INTO WINE.

servants also, knew that a miracle had been performed, and were thus made to believe the stronger in Him. After this Christ went down to Capernaum with His mother and brothers, followed also by the disciples, who remained there with him for a few days.

THE MONEY CHANGERS DRIVEN FROM THE TEMPLE.

Jesus tarried at Capernaum but a short while, because the Feast of the Passover was near at hand, and with His disciples He went down to Jerusalem to assist in the celebration, and here was to begin His public ministry, according to the prophecy, "Jehovah, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple."

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JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER.

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"And about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea." St. Mark vi

The Passover was a great event in Jerusalem, attended, as it was, by not only the people of Judea, but by those from the countries of the dispersion—Egypt, Syria, Rome, etc., as well. How, or in what manner, Christ came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover we are not told, but it is evident that His appearance there was as a teacher, and one having much authority. We may therefore conceive how great He had grown in public estimation since the day of His baptism, when a dove flew out of the heavens and lighted on Him like a benediction, while a still voice, like the lips of a breeze, proclaimed Him the Holy Son.

We can imagine how Jerusalem appeared on the solemn feast day of the Passover. Large as was the city, it could not accommodate a tithe of the worshippers. Josephus tells us that in the year A. D. 65 there were three million Jews in attendance at the feast. Possibly this enormous number was exceeded by those who came in the time of our Lord, before so many Jews had drifted to other parts of the world. Jerusalem was, therefore, not only filled with participants in the ceremonies of the feast, but the adjacent hills and fields must have shone white with tents, like a great army in camp.

But above, and sublimely conspicuous among all this immense gathering, was the one greatest spectacle in all Jerusalem, the Temple on Mount Moriah, that looked down from its lofty eminence upon the vast crowds that flocked to offer service there. Here was the holy shrine of David, of Solomon; rebuilt by the profane hand of Herod, it is true, but still preserving, in its material, no less than its spiritual aspect, the holiest traditions of the race.

As the Temple was the shrine of worship, circumstances made of it a place of barter; for, as thousands came without bringing with them appropriate offerings, shrewd votaries, peering beyond the glamour of devout service, discovered their opportunity of adding worldly possessions to their spiritual needs by offering for sale oxen, sheep and doves to those who desired to purchase such subjects for sacrifice. Such trading was at first conducted in the outer courts of the Temple, but as competition increased these merchants gradually intruded upon the space within the sacred edifice until they fairly took possession. From dealing in offerings for sacrifice it was but a step to further profanation. The people from abroad came here to pay the Temple tax, and as the foreign coins which they brought were not current in Jerusalem, brokers set up their places to exchange shekels of the sanctuary for such foreign money. Thus the Temple had become a great exchange bazaar, the profits of which were, no doubt, shared with the priests.

On the first day of the Passover, when the bustle of preparation had given place to active trade, and the Temple and its courts contained a medley of lowing herds, cooing doves, bleating sheep, and above all, the voices of inviting brokers, came Jesus to the place to perform His vows and to teach the people. In a moment, as He perceived the desecration, and vile uses to which the Temple had been put, His brow beetles with indignation, and seizing a whip

of small cords, possibly used by a driver of cattle, He plies it vigorously upon the desecrators until they flee from His scourgings; the brokers' tables are then overthrown, the money scattered over the marble pavements, and the place speedily cleansed of the unclean things which defiled it. As the avaricious hucksters made good their retreat Christ called to them in these



"YE HAVE MADE MY FATHER'S HOUSE A DEN OF THIEVES."

words: "Take these things hence! Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise!"

The superiority of Jesus was manifested over the priests of the Temple by the fact that no one offered to interfere with Him, though in thus harshly driving out the merchants He revoked, arbitrarily, a privilege which had evidently been granted by those having authority. Instead of His action exciting anger, it appears to have raised expectancy among the Jews who had

already heard, but probably received the rumor as an idle tale, that Jesus was the Messiah. They therefore said to Him: "What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing Thou doest such things?" Which question bore the same meaning as that afterward addressed to Him, "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." But to this He only replied, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Not understanding that He spoke with a hidden meaning, and that He referred to the temple of His body, in their astonishment they said: "Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days?" Though Jesus gave His questioners no satisfaction, and withheld from them an acknowledgment of His Messiahship, yet the manner of His speech, while it puzzled the priests, seemed to have served an excellent purpose, for the cunning of His words impressed both priests and people with the superior wisdom which He possessed. Crowds besieged Him to hear Him preach, and thousands became at once converted. But this conversion was chiefly among the common people, the priests appearing outwardly as if convinced of the great truths which He declared, but secretly they held Him in contempt.

CONVERSION OF NICODEMUS.

There was a ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee, named Nicodemus, who was more affected by Christ's teaching than either the priests or people, but understanding the ill favor with which He was regarded by those high in authority, was restrained from making an open confession of his faith lest he should be made the object of scoffing. Revolving the matter in his mind for several days, he at length went to see Jesus in the night, when none that knew him might discover his visit, and hailing Christ as "Master," said: "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with Him." To this Jesus replied in language disguising His true meaning, as He had answered the others: "Verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Nicodemus thereupon asked an explanation of what had been spoken, by confessing that he knew not how a man could be born again when he is old. Perceiving that the heart of His questioner was inclined to an acceptance of His mission as it had been declared by John, Jesus told him that unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, and therefore made plain to Nicodemus that it was the spiritual second birth which was essential to salvation. But this consolation was not all that Jesus gave to Nicodemus, for to this humble ruler was first declared what sacrifice was to be made to save the world, in the following glowing and glorious promise:

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting

life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."

To Nicodemus, therefore, Christ vouchsafed the first confession of His real mission, and the bitter sacrifice which was to be made as an atonement for the sins of all mankind. The impression made upon Nicodemus by the speech of Jesus was both profound and exalting, though he is only mentioned three times in the history, but in the last of these he manifests how truly convinced he is of Christ's power and love. Though at first seeking Jesus under the cover of night, his fears of the loss of popularity by acknowledging Him never came to Nicodemus afterward. On the other hand, when the end of Christ's ministry was near, and enemies sought His life, in the supreme hour of His humiliation Nicodemus arose, solitary and alone, as a member of the Sanhedrim, and amid the clamors of his compeers, who, having prejudged the Lord, were only awaiting his arrest to pronounce sentence, confronted them with a question which brought the blush of shame to their cheeks as judges: "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?"

But yet again came Nicodemus, to manifest his love and faith in Jesus, when, after the crucifixion, the disciples were confounded and were afraid to acknowledge that they were followers of Him who had been condemned; when the mere suspicion of sympathy for Christ was sufficient to bring a man to judgment, Nicodemus shows his fearlessness, and reverence for his dead Lord. "And there came also Nicodemus (which at the first came to Jesus by night), and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight," with which to anoint the precious body. Timid in the beginning, in the end he showed a courage greater than that manifested by any of the disciples.

THE ARREST OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

How long Jesus remained in Jerusalem we know not, but perhaps for only a few days, or weeks at most. He found a strong prejudice prevailing against Him there, chiefly because He had not been brought up in the synagogue and instructed in the law, and, therefore, the priests were jealous because He received more attention from the people than they. Another cause of their ill-favor is found in the self-holiness which they, as Pharisees, arrogated to themselves, and their condemnation of any one who pretended to as many virtues, or attempted to declare a better doctrine. These influences decided Jesus to withdraw from Jerusalem to the country districts in Judea, where He began preaching and baptizing the people—though the actual administration of this rite was performed by His disciples. John was at the time preaching at Enon, and baptizing his converts in the small streams near that place, while Jesus confined His work to the banks of the Jordan, where there came to Him great gatherings of people and hundreds were baptized daily. So numerous were His converts that some of those who made confession under John began to inquire why Jesus should meet with the greater success, and thus a spirit of

rivalry was apparently about to spring up. John, however, though assailed by a temptation which few could resist, took occasion to bear a final testimony to Christ, no less remarkable for explicit statement of the gospel than for its profound humility and self-renunciation. Reminding both parties to the controversy that he had always insisted on the superiority of Christ to himself, as being the very purpose of his mission, he marks this as the divinely appointed order:—"He *must* increase, I must decrease." And to this law he not merely submits, but derives from it unbounded satisfaction. Likening himself to the bridegroom's friend at a wedding, rejoicing at the bridegroom's voice, while Christ rejoiced over his pure spouse, the Church, about to be redeemed, he declares, "This my joy therefore is fulfilled." Though himself destined to remain outside of the Christian Church, he concludes his testimony by pointing his disciples and all his hearers to the way within it.

SELF-RENUNCIATION OF JOHN.

To avoid any appearance of rivalry, John left the vicinity of Enon and advanced northward into Galilee, where he continued to preach to immense crowds, and where his influence became so great that Herod Antipas, who was now ruler of Judea, went out to hear him. Herod had married Herodias, the self-divorced wife of his half-brother Philip, against which



HERODIAS.

(From the Painting by Benjamin Constant, exhibited at the Salon, 1881.)

act there had been complaint by the people, that was silenced only by the threats of Herod. But John was not a man to be easily intimidated, and in an impetuous, fiery manner which was so characteristic of him, he preached against the unlawful marriage of Herod, and to his face declared, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." This speech, so well calculated to inflame the people, who were now laboring under intense religious enthusiasm, not only angered Herod, but impassioned Herodias the more, and at her instigation John was seized and cast into prison at Peræa. His execution would no doubt have followed at once but

for the fear which Herod had of the people, who had accepted John as the forerunner of Christ, and hailed him as the re-incarnated Elijah. Perhaps Herod himself was also impressed with the true prophetic nature of John, as his conscience is said to have troubled him, and this fact increased his reluctance to punish with death a prophet who had declared what he knew to be true, and what God had, perhaps, prompted him to pronounce. John therefore remained in prison several months, an object of Herodias's hatred, and of the Pharisees' jealousy. More than once this wicked woman was baffled in her designs upon John's life, but at length an occasion arose which gave her opportunity to satisfy the bitter resentment which she felt. A court festival was kept at Machærus in honor of the king's birthday. After supper the daughter of Herodias came in and danced before the company, and so charmed was the tetrarch by her grace, that he promised with an oath that he would give her



SALOME DANCING BEFORE HEROD.

whatever she should ask. Salome, prompted by her abandoned mother, demanded the head of John the Baptist. The promise had been given in the hearing of his distinguished guests, and so Herod, though loth to be made the instrument of so bloody a work, gave instructions to an officer of his guard, who went and executed John in the prison, and his head was brought to feast the eyes of the adulteress whose sins he had denounced.

Meanwhile Jesus, turning to the people, vindicates John from any suspicion of wavering or time-serving that his message might have raised, and bears testimony to his true character as "a prophet, yea, more than a prophet." They had gone forth to the wilderness to see him, and what had they beheld? No pliant reed, that would bend before the wind of adversity; no dainty courtier, to fear a king's frown or a queen's hatred. No! he was the very Elijah predicted by the prophets as the Messiah's herald; but their childish folly, never knowing what to ask for or expect, vented itself in discontent and unbelief alike against the stern asceticism of John and the winning love of Jesus. "But wisdom is justified of all her children." And now the time was already come for Christ to reveal Himself as a *judge*, to those who would not accept Him as a Saviour.

JESUS DISCOURSES WITH THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

Shortly after John's departure from Enon into Galilee, Jesus found the prejudices of the Pharisees so great against Him that He too left Judea and

journeyed to the retired districts of Galilee, where he would be removed from the Jews who were seeking His downfall, if not destruction. In making this journey, from a point far north on the Jordan, His nearest way was through the district of Samaria, and by way of a pass that led into the valley of Shechem, near which were the graves of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and over which road Jesus had before passed during His childhood.

In this vale of Shechem Jacob first pitched his tent after his parting from Esau in safety, and here he purchased a field in which he erected an altar to God. And here also assembled all the tribes of Judah before Joshua, to receive their allotments. On the north stood the lofty peak of Ebal, and to the south was Gerizim. Here the tribes were divided, some standing on the base and sides of one mountain, some upon the other, while the ark, priests and Levites stood between; there it was that the nation, with a dramatic solemnity unparalleled in history, entered into a covenant with God.

To this sacred place Christ now journeyed, His mind, no doubt, filled with solemn reflection, and contemplation of the great events that had transpired on this once hallowed ground, since profaned, however, by those sent by the king of Babylon, seven hundred years before, to



SALOME.

(Reproduction of one of the world's famous paintings.)

replace the Jews. Here now were the hated Samaritans, who being repelled by the Jews from participating in the worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, had built a temple of their own on Gerizim, for which they claimed a greater sanctity. Thus sprung up a hatred between the Jews and Samaritans that time had not diminished, but rather rooted more deeply.



HERODIAS RECEIVES THE HEAD OF JOHN.

"And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel."—MATT. xiv. 11.

At the foot of a low spur which crops out near the northeastern base of Mount Gerizim was the celebrated well of Jacob, dug by that patriarch two thousand years before to water his vast herds. The centuries had not touched it with their corroding fingers; the well still remained as when first dug, eighty-five feet deep, through the solid rock, and eight feet in diameter, while the

water continued its grateful flow as in the early years of Jewish freedom. Shechem, once the capital of Judah, where kings were crowned, was near by, but no longer a royal city; it alone showed signs of decay, but the poor people still came out from its broken gates to draw water at the famous well, unconscious, though, of the portentous events that had transpired about the place.

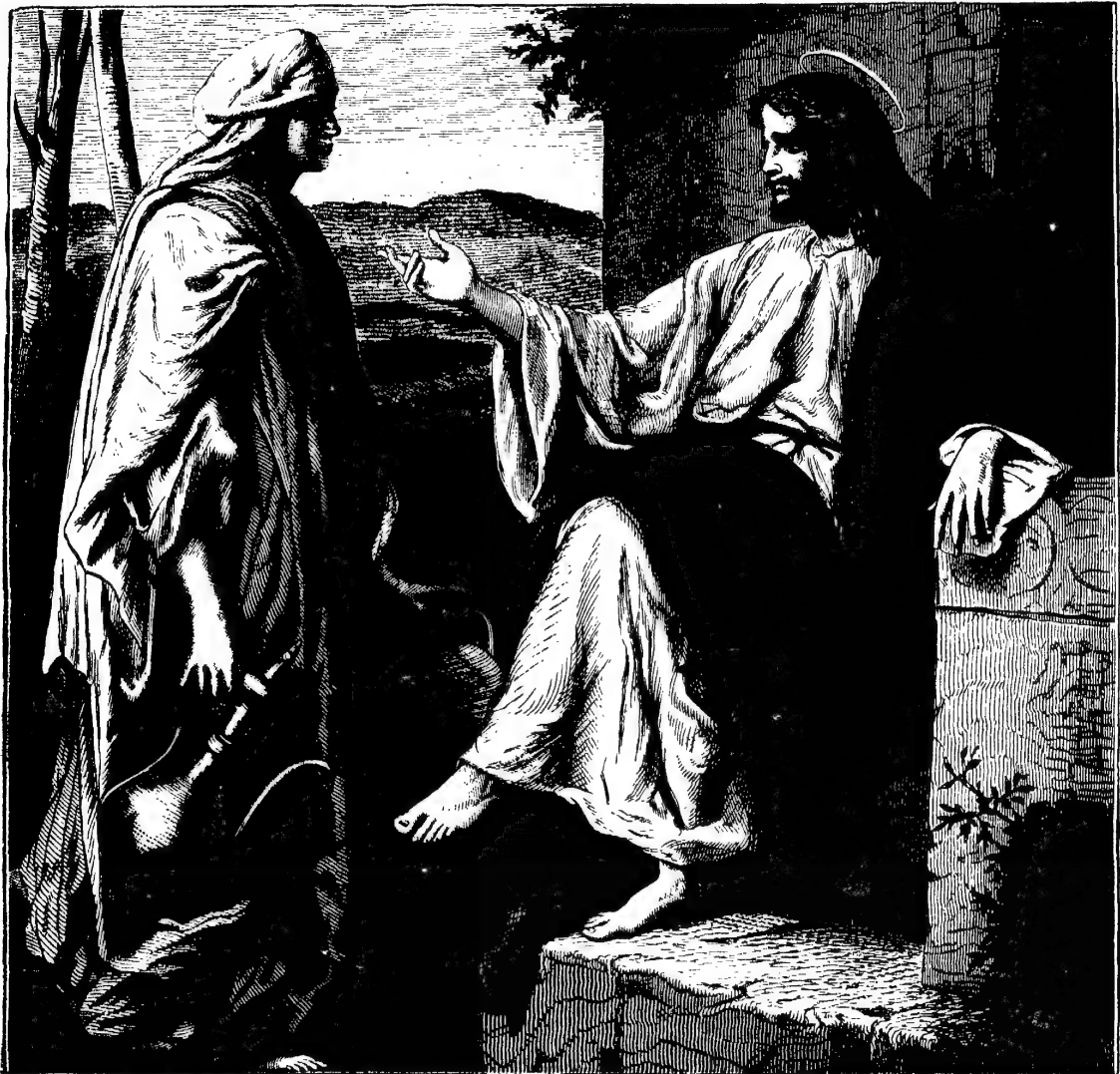
It was in the vale of Shechem, beside the hoary but inviting well of Jacob, that Jesus came with His disciples, in the heat of the day, and rested for a while. The disciples tarried but a few moments, for they had no food with them, and went on into the city to buy provisions. While they were gone a woman of Sychar, which was a village near by, came to draw water at the well, and as she carried a water-pot and rope Christ asked her to draw and give Him drink. Perceiving at once that He was a Jew, the woman replied, "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" Conscious of the absence of any outward appearance of Divinity in His nature, Christ gave the woman such an answer as was calculated to excite in her a curiosity to know something concerning Him: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, 'Give Me to drink,' thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

Believing that Christ had reference to fresh water from the well, but evidently impressed by his august address or the benign expression of his countenance, she addressed him most respectfully, saying, "Master, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast Thou that living water?"

Having gained her respect, and doubtless excited her curiosity, Jesus increased her confusion of mind by saying, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Eager with anticipation, she asks, "Master, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

Seeing that she was incapable of understanding the import of His words, Christ determined to reveal His nature to her in a more direct manner, and accordingly asked her to call her husband, knowing what reply she would make. Confused the more by His request, she answered, "I have no husband." This gave to Christ the opportunity which He foresaw to show her how perfectly He knew the heart and mind of all through the Divine power within Him: "Thou hast well said, 'I have no husband:' for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly." In other words, He told the woman that she was living in a condition of unlawful cohabitation, and so explicitly revealed her life that she saw her questioner must be more than mortal, and gave expression to this belief by saying to Him, "Master, I perceive that Thou art a prophet." A discourse followed, wherein Christ taught the woman the difference between an outward worship of God through impressive ceremonies in fine temples, and the worship

of Him in the heart and spirit. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Moved by what the Lord spoke, and catching, as it were, the shadow of His Divine nature, the woman spoke, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ. When He is come, He will tell us all things," whereupon Jesus replied, "I that speak unto thee am He."



"I THAT SPEAK UNTO THEE AM HE."

At this moment, when the conversation was most interesting, and the heart leaps with expectation for another revelation, the disciples who had been sent to Shechem for food returned and expressed in mute astonishment their surprise at finding Jesus in familiar conversation with so lowly a person. The woman, however, transported with enthusiasm, put down her water-pot and

hastened away to tell her people of the wonderful man she had met at Jacob's Well. To her friends she exclaimed, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?"

While the woman was gone the disciples offered the food which they had brought and besought Jesus to eat, but He only answered, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Not understanding the import of His words the disciples, in their simplicity, inquired if, during their absence, any man had brought Him food, to which He answered that His meat was to do the will of His Heavenly Father. Then lifting His eyes toward the green fields which stretched away down that beautiful valley and suggested to Him the exquisite parable, He spoke, "Say not ye, There are yet four months and then cometh harvest? behold I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathered fruit unto life eternal."

The woman soon returned to Jesus, followed by a number of her townspeople, who surrounded and entreated Him to return home with them, accepting Him at once as the long-promised Messiah. For two days he tarried with the Samaritans, and though it is not recorded what He said to them, the effect of His teaching was to make many believe that He was indeed Christ, the Saviour of the world.

The familiarity which Jesus exhibited with the Samaritans, those most bitterly detested by the Jews, was the first lesson He taught that all people, regardless of race or training, were equally favored of God, provided the heart inclined to truth and righteousness; it was also a sign which Jesus chose to give that the exclusiveness of the Jewish Church was offensive to God, and that Divine sympathy and love extended to all mankind, not excepting such degraded creatures as He knew the woman at the well to be.

HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

After tarrying two days in the vicinity of Shechem, Jesus and His disciples resumed their journey into Galilee. It would appear that some desired that He should go to Nazareth, for as He travelled, conversing of the people and their spiritual needs, He says, in sorrow, "A prophet hath no honor in his own country." Evidently this must have been His reason for not going to Nazareth, which lay so near by His route as He journeyed on to Cana. His fame had so rapidly increased and gone before Him that as He came into the gates of Cana vast throngs greeted Him, many no doubt led by curiosity, but others believing that He was indeed the promised Messiah.

Among these latter who came earnestly to seek Him was a member of the court of Herod Antipas, miscalled a "nobleman" in the translation. This man rode down from Capernaum to ask Christ's blessing upon his son, who lay sick near unto death, the physicians who attended him having given him over to die. This courtier was like nearly all the others who came to see Jesus;

while they had some faith, certainly more than a hope that He was Christ, yet they were moved by a curiosity to behold the proof in miracles rather than in instructions which pointed them to the way of eternal life. When the courtier, therefore, asked Jesus to come down and heal his son, he evidently expected that Jesus could really perform such a miracle and that He would esteem it an honor to work His powers before the people upon a person of rank. But instead of immediately responding to the request, Jesus answered: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe," which was in the nature of a reproof for the curiosity which was displayed, and which was well merited. However, the courtier was too anxious for the life of his son to waste time in listening to pious reflections, and in the agony of suspense he implores Christ, "Sir (equivalent to master), come down ere my child die!" Thus appealed to, in language which manifested his faith in the ability of Jesus to save his boy, Christ dismissed the trustful courtier with these grateful words, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." That the man of rank believed from that hour his son would recover, is attested by the fact that he returned home at once, but travelled so slowly that though Capernaum was but twenty-five miles distant from Cana, he did not reach his house until evening of the following day. As his servants saw him approaching they ran out to greet him with the joyful tidings, "Thy son liveth," or, more properly, "Thy son has recovered." Then he asked them what hour he began to amend, and they replied at the seventh hour of yesterday did the fever leave him. As this was the hour when Jesus had promised that his son should be healed, the courtier knew it was to Christ he owed his restoration, so he and all his house believed on Jesus and glorified Him. After this, Christ preached in the synagogues and converted all who came to hear Him about Cana.

THE PEOPLE OF NAZARETH SEEK HIS LIFE.

When the fame of Jesus had spread throughout all Galilee, and He was called by the people of many cities in Palestine to come and preach to them, just as the services of popular ministers of to-day are in great demand, His heart, yearning for Nazareth, where His boyhood was spent, prompted Him to go from Cana to that town. He dismissed His disciples, however, and journeyed on alone, healing and preaching by the way. Arriving at Nazareth, he spent some time with His mother and went to the synagogue to worship with His people, without, however, exhibiting Himself as a teacher, or appearing in any respect other than as an humble man, careful of His conduct and pious in His demeanor.

The Jewish synagogue in Christ's day was a very plain building, though often built of the purest marble. On one side of the entrance were seats for the men; on the other, behind a lattice, the women, wrapped in their long veils, sat and worshipped. At the end was the *tebhah*, or ark, of painted wood, which held the rolls of Scripture, and at one side of this was the *bema*,

an elevated seat for the reader, who was any one who had a reputation for learning, and had been invited by the chief of the synagogue to take that part of the service. In the chief seats sat ten or more "men of leisure," one of them the chief of the synagogue. The *chazzen*, or "angel," was the man who had the care of the Scripture rolls, handing them to the reader. After the prayers two lessons were always read, one from the Law, or books of Moses, and one from the Prophets.

The fame of Jesus, as the promised Messiah, did not reach Nazareth, it appears, until a time after His visit to the place, subsequent to performing His miracles in Cana. Report had no doubt been made often to the Nazarenes that He was in the line of the priesthood, and therefore entitled to teach in the synagogues, but very few believed it, and were the less disposed to give the claim credence from the fact that He was not brought up in the schools wherein candidates were prepared for the priesthood, but spent His early years assisting His father at his trade as a carpenter. However, when it was told in Nazareth how Jesus healed the courtier's son, and of the enthusiasm inspired by His teachings at Cana, He was invited by the rabbis to read the second lesson on a certain Sabbath. In compliance with this request He ascended to the seat prepared for the reader, and taking the sacred roll, opened it and read the following prophetic words of Isaiah, peculiarly appropriate to the occasion: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." When Jesus had thus read He returned the roll to the keeper, and sat down and began to preach, saying, among other things that excited the wonder of His hearers, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." This declaration, taken in connection with the reports of His Messiahship, led the people to desire of Him some evidence that He was the promised Christ, for, said they, "Is not this Joseph's son?" Anticipating their desire, He forestalled it by saying, "Ye will surely say unto Me this proverb: 'Physician, heal thyself;' whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum (or Cana), do also here in this country; but I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country." In proof of this He reminded them that Elias (Elijah) came to the succor of only one widow in the days of the famine in Sidon, though there were thousands suffering; so were there many lepers in Israel, in the time of Eliseus (Elisha), but the prophet healed only Naaman, who was a Syrian.

When the people saw that He would perform no miracle to gratify their curiosity, and that He answered their requests in this wise, while denouncing their sins, all the congregation arose in wrath and, seizing upon Him as a blasphemer and infamous pretender, they carried Him by force out of the city and to the brow of a high eminence which overlooked a rugged gorge covered

with rocks deep below. Here they determined to wreak their full vengeance by casting Him headlong, that He might be dashed in pieces on the stones and His carcass be given to the ravens. But His hour had not yet come. In a moment the wild cries subsided, the voice of anger was hushed; a calm stole upon the mad throng, and amid the silence of the stricken crowd, palsied by the breath of Omnipotence, He walked out from among them and went peacefully on His way. Thus was a miracle wrought before their eyes, but their hearts were not softened.

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

The scene of Christ's next labors and miracle was beside the Lake of Galilee, in the vicinity of Capernaum, a town which had many attractions for



THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

Him, perhaps, because of His invariable good treatment by the citizens, not less than the romantic picturesqueness of the place. This lake is variously called in the Scriptures, Sea of Galilee, of Tiberias, and of Gennesaret, and became the scene of many of the Lord's miracles. Here He spent a greater portion of His ministry, devoted to preaching, relieving the sick, and casting out devils. It is here that Christ is first presented to our view as preaching to such vast multitudes that He was forced to take His station in a boat on the lake, pushed off from the shore, so as to face all the people. To gain this position He had recourse to one of two fishing boats that were drawn out upon the beach, while the owners, two brothers, named Simon and Andrew,

were washing their nets after several ineffectual hauls. After Christ had preached awhile from the boat He called to Simon and Andrew, and bade them push off in the other boat to deep water and to let down their nets. In reply to this request Simon responded, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at Thy word, I will let down the net." This answer was equivalent to replying that he knew there were no fish to be taken in the lake at that place, but, if Jesus desired it, he would cast the net to show how useless had been their toil. In making this demonstration, however, instead of bringing up an empty net as before, Simon and Andrew found the net so filled with fish that in the strain to draw them in the lines broke, and they had to call for help from some fishermen in another boat some little distance away. These other fishers were John and James, the sons of Zebedee, who was also a fisherman of Galilee, and they came quickly to the aid of their astonished partners. When the fish of this single haul were secured they were thrown into the two boats, which were loaded to the point of sinking. This miraculous draught was made in the presence of all the vast multitude, and so impressed was Simon with the sight that he fell down upon his knees, exclaiming, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," thus, by direct prayer and confession of sin, recognizing for the first time Christ's divinity. In response to this prayer Jesus said to Simon: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." The impression made upon Simon was no greater than the effect produced upon his brother, Andrew, and John and James, for the four brought their boats to land, and leaving them, loaded as they were, with a catch which might have yielded them a sum very considerable in the eyes of men so poor as they, followed Jesus and became His disciples.

CHRIST DRIVES A DEMON OUT OF A MAN POSSESSED.

On the Sabbath following the miraculous draught of fishes Jesus went up to Capernaum, on the north shore of the lake, and preached there in the synagogue. While conducting His discourse a man interrupted Him with the exclamation, which brought great surprise to the congregation: "Ha! What have I do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us?" Christ instantly perceived that this poor creature was a lunatic, with probably only a ray of reason left to remind him that Jesus had been called an impostor by the Nazarenes. Whether, however, it was the irony of lunacy which prompted the victim to add, "I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God," or whether this speech was suggested by an evil spirit that possessed the man, we are left to form our own conclusions, but since in either view of the case the demonstration of Christ's power remains the same, any controversy concerning these points becomes hypercritical. We have already seen, in the temptation of Jesus, how powerless Satan was in the presence of the Holy One; and in the miracles which were afterward performed, Christ shows his power over evil spirits.

It was evident from the text, however, that the people believed the disturber of their worship was possessed of a devil, or unclean spirit, and therefore Christ chose rather to indulge this belief than to excite a controversy which might diminish the effect of the lesson He sought to teach. Accordingly, He spoke to the man, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." Instantly reason was restored to the sufferer, and he turned from his delusions and frenzies to worshipping Jesus.

This miracle astounded the congregation, as well it might. They had thus seen a manifestation of the Divine mind over that of a deranged being, and perceived that with a word Christ could perform such wonders as only one who possessed the power from God, or was leagued with the Prince of Darkness, could accomplish. They gave expression to their surprise by asking one another, "What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with what authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits and they obey him?" But though they did not fully understand through what influence Christ cast out devils—which all crazy persons were supposed to possess—they were satisfied that He was no ordinary man, and they therefore spread His fame until all Galilee was excited and the crowds that flocked to see Him continued to increase.

HEALING THE SICK AND CASTING OUT DEVILS.

When Jesus came out of the synagogue He went to the house of Simon Peter, who had extended to Him the hospitality of his humble home, which must have been poor indeed, since he was a fisherman, dependent upon his daily catch of fish for subsistence. When Christ entered the lowly abode, one of the first things He saw there was a sick woman, consumed with a fever, and unable to raise her head. She was the mother of Simon's wife, being cared for by a dutiful daughter, whose distress was great, but whose parental love brought sunshine into the home of poverty. Jesus went immediately to the bedside, and taking the sick mother's hand, gently raised her up, probably at the same time passing His healing touch over her hot brow, when suddenly the fever left her and she arose, restored to health and full of thanksgiving. So great was the excitement now in Capernaum that people from the country about came hastening to Him; they crowded the fisherman's hut, poured out into the yard, filled the streets, probably gathered on the house-tops to catch a glimpse of His gracious form. Many came out of curiosity, others as believers in His Messiahship, and yet others were brought suffering from all manner of ills, the sick, the lame, and those afflicted with insanity—possessed of devils. These were speedily healed by a touch of His magic hand, and sent on their way praising God for the gift of a blessed Saviour. When the Sabbath day had been thus spent dispensing blessings upon the sick, and in giving hope to those who sought the means of salvation, Jesus rested and slept under Simon's roof until the early hours of morning, when He stole out before the crowds began to assemble again, and retired to a lonely spot to pray and hold

communion with His Heavenly Father. But the anxiety of the people was such that, with Simon, they went out, about the break of day, to search for Jesus, and when He was found they greeted Him with the persuasive plea: "All men seek for Thee." His reply was, "Let us go into the next town that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth." This was equivalent to telling the people of Capernaum that He had done enough to convince them of His mission and to show them the way unto salvation; that it was now His duty to declare Himself, by divine works, in other places. So He went into all the towns of Galilee, preaching and healing the sick, while crowds continued to follow Him wherever He went. So general had become His fame as The Christ, attested by so many miracles wrought before the eyes of multitudes, that thousands came to hear Him from Syria, Decapolis, and the region beyond the Jordan, including all Judea.

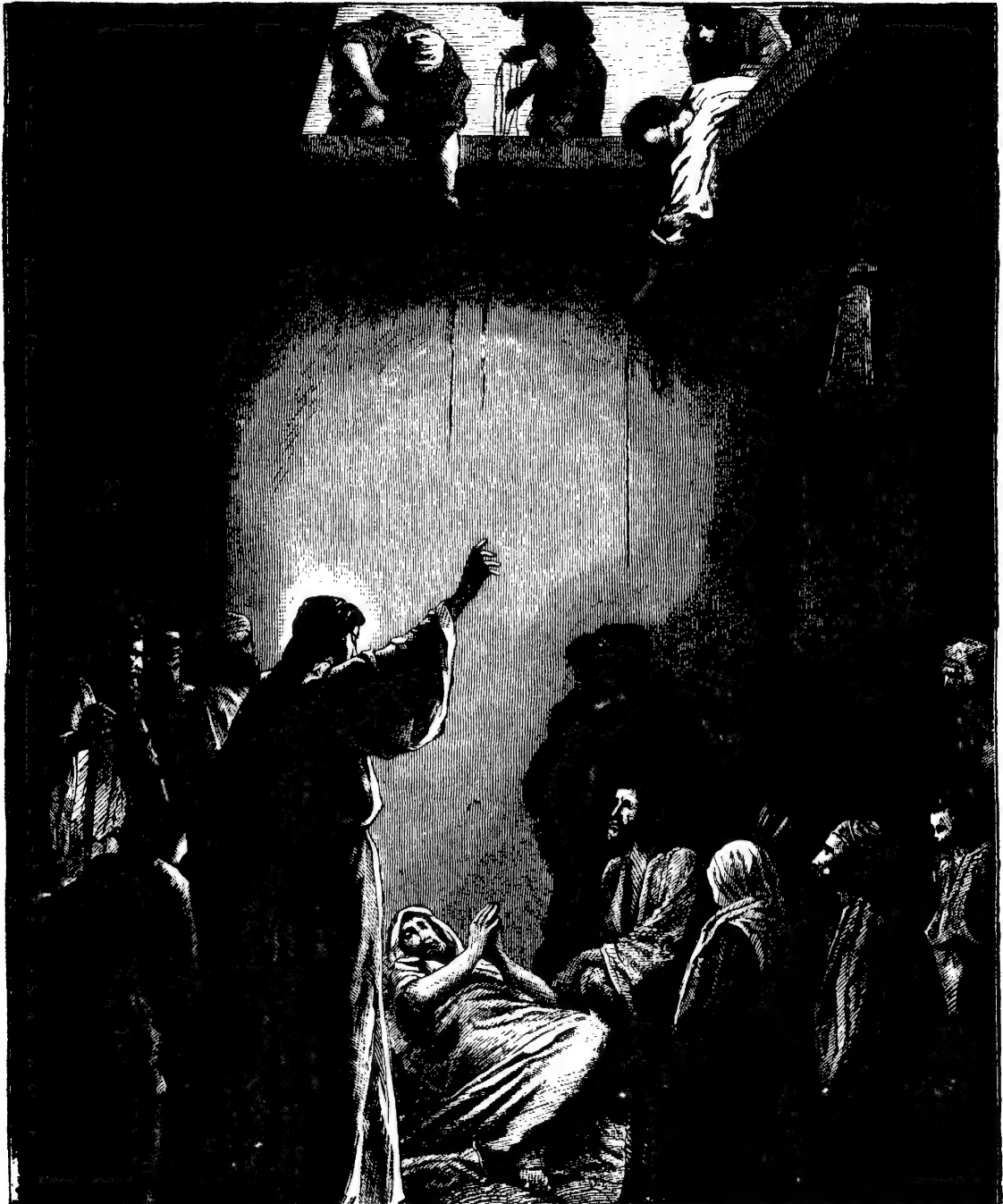
JESUS HEALS A LEPER.

While preaching in a certain city, the name of which none of the apostles have given us, a man afflicted with leprosy came to Jesus beseeching, and, kneeling down to Him, said: "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." Leprosy has always been, and is to this day, regarded as the most terrible of all diseases that mankind is subject to. In the time of Christ, however, to its loathsome and incurable virulence was added the belief that leprosy was the type of inveterate sin, so that the sufferer was not only excluded from the society of his fellows, but was also denied the ordinances of religion. But outcast as he was among men, the leper found fellowship with Christ, for the Divine One had compassion on him, and stretching forth His hand He touched the sufferer, saying: "I will; be thou made clean," and immediately the man was cured. In healing the leper, therefore, Christ proved that He could purge the soul of sin as easily as He could drive disease from the body, but yet He carefully regarded the law, and charged the leper to repair to a priest and offer a thank-offering, as appointed by Moses, for his restoration; he was also admonished against telling any one of what had been done for him, but to go directly to the priest and offer himself for cleansing. Instead of obeying this injunction of the Lord, the leper, unable to repress his joy and thankfulness, went "blazing abroad" the miracle of his healing. The report spread rapidly, and thousands of cripples, sick, lepers and infirm, so besieged Jesus that to escape their importunities, for a necessary rest, He withdrew for a time into the wilderness.

THE PERSISTENCY OF THE FAITHFUL.

After Jesus had rested a short while in the wilderness, He returned to Capernaum and began again His gracious ministrations to the sick. Many Pharisees came now to hear Him, as well as others learned in the law who were attracted partly out of curiosity, but chiefly by a desire to manifest their learning and to accuse Him of violations before the people. While Christ was

teaching before the great crowd so mixed with carpers and the faithful, opportunity was afforded for Him to manifest His power, and at the same time



"THY SINS BE FORGIVEN THEE."

impart a wholesome lesson to the Pharisees. The house in which Jesus was preaching was not only filled, but the crowd outside and at the door was so

dense that neither exit nor entrance was possible. Four friends of a palsied man had sought in vain for an entrance, desiring to reach Jesus with their charge, but being unable to penetrate the crowd they at length drew the sufferer up on to the housetop, and removing the tiling from the roof, they thus made an opening through which they lowered the palsied man on his bed to where Christ stood. By this act perceiving how great was the poor man's faith, Jesus turned to the bedridden paralytic and said: "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Horrified at these words, which sounded so blasphemous to the Pharisees, in a protesting spirit they inquired: "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" In reply to this cavilling inquiry He asked: "Which is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Rise, take up thy bed and walk?" To demonstrate, therefore, His divine prerogative, He said: "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thy house." Immediately the paralytic was infused with new life, and with a gleeful bound he got up, and taking his couch upon his shoulders like the strong man which he had thus suddenly become, walked out of the house giving praise to God. This sight was a convincing demonstration even to the Pharisees, who now also glorified Jesus, and being filled with fear, said to one another: "We have seen strange things to-day."

JESUS ILLUSTRATES HIS DISCOURSE BY PARABLES.

After healing the paralytic, Jesus went out of the house where He had been preaching and repaired to the shore of Lake Gennesaret, whither the great multitude of people followed, anxious to hear every word He might speak and to see every wonder He might perform. As He walked toward the lakeside He saw a tax collector, named Levi, sitting at a stand where He received taxes from the Jews.

These tax gatherers were called publicans, and were under-officers of the Roman government, whose arbitrary exactions made them objects of intense loathing to the Jews. There were some, however, as we find in every obnoxious vocation, that were possessed of humane feelings, and who, while their calling was despised, were personally liked. Such a one seems to have been Levi, afterwards called Matthew. This man received the Lord's favor, probably because of his good reputation among the people of Capernaum, and he was accordingly called by Jesus to follow Him. What the nature of this call was we are only able to determine by subsequent events, for we know that Levi (Matthew) became from that moment one of the disciples.

When Christ had preached again on the shores of the lake, generally called the *sea*, He returned to Matthew's house and sat down with him to eat; so persistent was the crowd, however, that several followed him into the house, some of whom were doubtless Matthew's neighbors or friends, and a number sat down at the table with Him. When the Pharisees saw Jesus thus eating

with Levi, the publican, and with Gentiles, whom they called sinners, they turned quickly to the disciples among them, and in an accusing voice said, "He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners." To the implacable character of the Jews, who were the greatest of sticklers for the letter of their laws, this commingling with sinners, and with the obnoxious tax collectors, was unpardonable, and to them an evidence of Christ's moral delinquency. Hearing their complaints, Jesus condescended to explain to them that it is not those in health who need a physician, but the sick; and that His mission was not to call the righteous, but the sinful to repentance, which answer was so apt and convincing that the Pharisees were confused. When after this confusion they asked Him why it was that, while John's disciples fasted according to the law, His own disciples disregarded such observance, He replied to them by parables which illustrated that the spiritual power of His own kingdom was not confined within forms and traditions that appealed only to the eye but rather to the heart, the seat of conscience.

When the Sabbath day arrived Jesus and his disciples were on a journey toward another part of Galilee, still followed by a large body of men, not a few of whom were Pharisees. These self-righteous bigots had often beheld the power that had been given Him, and were ready to confess the more than human agency which He employed, but were still quite as ready to condemn any infraction of the old Jewish law as before; so when His disciples began to pluck the ears of corn which grew in a field through which the route lay, these Pharisees exclaimed in their holy horror, "Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?" But Jesus only answered, by reminding them of how David, to appease his hunger, had entered into the house of God and eaten the shew-bread, which it was unlawful for any but priests to eat; that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath; more than this He declared that the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.

THE PHARISEES DEMAND HIS PUNISHMENT.

After this Jesus entered into a synagogue and began to preach on a Sabbath to a large congregation; while He was thus teaching a man approached having a withered hand, which he extended and begged the Lord to restore.

The Pharisees were all attention in a moment, wondering if He would do such a gracious miracle on the sacred day in the synagogue devoted exclusively to worship. Jesus knew how the bigots in their hearts desired to accuse Him, and addressing them He therefore said, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save life or to kill?" But none of them answered Him, whereupon, seeing how embittered were their feelings toward Him and that they had set their regard upon the strict letter of the law, even though it were in conflict with the noblest instincts in nature, He said to the man, "Stretch forth thy hand." Immediately the man had extended his arm,

in obedience to the command, his hand was fully restored. Though a miracle was thus performed in their presence the Pharisees and Herodians accused Jesus of violating the law, and they set up a fierce cry against Him, demanding that He be stoned, or otherwise severely dealt with as a blasphemer and criminal.

To the reader who knows nothing of the austerities of the Jewish laws, or of the extraordinary bigotry of the Pharisaic sect, a refusal to accept the miracles performed by Christ as an evidence of His Divine nature, appears contrary to human nature. But it was to the tenacious principles of the race that a rejection of Christ was due, and to those understanding the Jewish nature and tradition, that rejection is perfectly natural. The Pharisee devoted all his spare time to a religious study of the traditions of the rabbis, which he considered far more important than the Scriptures themselves. For this reason, the declarations of the rabbis were held in greater veneration than the words of the prophets. A thousand foolish stories were told, and implicitly believed, of how certain rabbis had manifested their power over the elements and made inanimate objects obedient to their will.

The Pharisee was distinguished by the broad fringe to his dress, the great size of the four tassels on his cap, and the large phylacteries, or little boxes containing Scripture texts, which he wore strapped on his forehead and right arm. They prayed aloud, and took care that all should hear of any alms they gave. Some of them were sincere, devoted men—Pharisees from love to God—but, as a class, they were hypocrites, as Jesus called them, making numberless laws for the common people, and secretly breaking them themselves. One can better understand how these Pharisees bound heavy burdens on men's shoulders (as Christ said), by learning a few of the laws which they made as to the Sabbath. The day began at sunset on Friday and ended with sunset on Saturday; and, as the disappearance of the sun was the only mark of the time, its commencement was different on a hill-top and in a valley. If it were cloudy, the hens going to roost was the signal. The beginning and the close of the Sabbath was announced by a trumpet. All food must be prepared, all vessels washed, and all lights kindled before sunset. The money girdle must be taken off, and all tools laid aside. On Friday, before the beginning of the Sabbath, no one must go out of his house with a needle or a pin lest he forget to lay them aside before the Sabbath opens. Every one must also search his pockets at that time to see that there is nothing left in them with which it is forbidden to go out on the Sabbath. To wear one kind of sandals was "carrying a burden," while to wear another kind was not. It was unlawful to go out with wooden sandals or shoes which had nails in the soles, or with a shoe and a slipper, unless one foot were hurt. It was unlawful for any one to carry a loaf on the public street; but if two carried it, it was not unlawful. The quantity of food that might be carried on the Sabbath was settled by the rabbis; it must be less in bulk than a dried fig; if of honey, only as much as would

anoint a wound; if water, as much as would make eye-salve; if ink, as much as would form two letters. To light a fire, or even to put out a dangerous conflagration on the Sabbath, was considered a grave crime. No one might administer physic to the sick, set a broken bone, or put one back that had slipped out of joint on the Sabbath. Even if a person were buried under ruins no one might attempt to uncover him. There were also set rules for washing on the Sabbath. Water must be drawn on the previous day, and when used on the Sabbath it must be only for sprinkling the hands. For a long while a heated discussion was carried on between two Pharisees as to whether or not it was lawful to eat an egg that had been laid on a Sabbath. There was no dispute, however, on the point as to whether an egg could be thus eaten if laid by a hen that was kept for no other purpose. Such an idea was monstrous in the eyes of both; but if it had been decided that a hen should be killed and eaten on the day following, and by chance she lay an egg on the Sabbath? That was the question. One rabbi, Schammai, said such an egg might be lawfully eaten, but another rabbi, Hillel, held otherwise, and the egg was accordingly condemned.

There were thirty-nine principal occupations forbidden to the Jews on the Sabbath. A traveller must stop at the hour of midnight on Friday regardless of the wilderness or weather he might be in. The lame were permitted to use a crutch, but the blind could not lawfully carry a cane. A person could not carry a fan or whip to drive off the flies; a handkerchief must not be carried loose in the pocket, though it might be carried if tied to a girdle at the waist.

Though so many small things were forbidden to be done by a Jew on the Sabbath, it was lawful for his Gentile servant to do them for him, by which loop-hole through the law the rich Jew did not have to deny himself many privileges. Not only did they adopt many devices for indulging what the law forbade, but their hypocrisy extended so far that the Pharisees made of the Sabbath a day of feasting and social enjoyment, during which a bounteous hospitality was practised by the wealthy.

Amidst such austerities, subtleties, superstitions and bigotry, it is small matter for surprise that Jesus should become the object of hatred to the Pharisees, whose hypocrisy He was constantly exposing; but though they cried out in threats against Him, He passed them by and went up to Jerusalem to attend the celebration of the Passover.

CHRIST HEALS THE CRIPPLE AT BETHESDA'S POOL.

Soon after Christ came within the gates of Jerusalem He repaired to the pool of Bethesda (signifying the *house of mercy*), which was near the sheep-gate on the northeast side of the Temple.

It is said that the waters of this tank were connected with those of the pool of Siloam by subterraneous channels, through which there were sudden flushes that made the water bubble up in commotion. At such seasons the

water was supposed to have healing virtues, confined, however, to the first who stepped down into the tank, around which porticoes were built to shelter



POOL OF BETHESDA.

"For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water."—JOHN v. 4.

the multitude of sick and cripples who came to take their chance. The doubts that have been cast upon the prodigy do not in the least detract from the use made of it by Christ. On the contrary, the supposition of its being a

delusion sets the truth of His miracle in a more striking light, as being the reality of that power which was there vainly sought. In any case, the miracle itself displayed the power, which Jesus displayed in a subsequent discourse, of exercising authority both over the laws of nature and the positive institutions of religion. The case chosen by our Lord was among the most hopeless of all that lay in the house of mercy. The cripple had been paralyzed for



"ARISE, TAKE UP THY BED, AND WALK."

thirty-eight years, the very period that his forefathers had wandered in the wilderness; and the burden of his infirmities was aggravated by the consciousness that they were the natural reward of his sins. Thus he was a fit type of the people, in whom Jesus fulfilled the words of Isaiah, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." Jesus healed him, not by helping him to the water, nor by any other visible agency, but by the very command to use the powers that had been so long suspended: "Rise, take up thy bed and walk!"

When the man, restored upon the moment, took up his pallet and started with it toward his home, the Pharisees stopped him on the way, saying, "It is unlawful for thee to carry thy bed on the Sabbath." To which he responded, with that confidence born of the miracle which had been done for him, that he had been bidden to carry it by the Great One who had healed him. When these Jews knew that it was Jesus who had again counselled the violation of their austere law, they made angry threats against Him and sought His life, but Christ defended His act by declaring to them that it was through God alone He was able to perform such wonders, and that as the Son of God He had been given the power to raise the dead and to call sinners to repentance. He thereupon announces to them that the hour was coming when the dead should hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment." "The works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me."

THE TWELVE DISCIPLES CHOSEN.

After thus announcing the new law to the Jews, and explaining to them from whence the power had come that enabled Him to do such great works, Jesus retired to a desert place on the mountain, and spent a night in prayer and communion with God. Early on the following morning a vast crowd assembled as usual to hear Him preach, but before discoursing to them He called twelve persons from the assemblage whom He designed should become His special messengers on earth and to bear testimony to all His acts. These messengers He called *apostles*, and were selected from among those who had already been His intimate friends and followers during the first year of His ministry in Galilee. Their names were as follows: Simon Peter, and Andrew his brother; James, and John his brother, sons of Zebedee; Philip; Bartholomew, who was first called Nathanael; Thomas; Matthew, who as a publican was called Levi; James the son of Alphæus; Simon the Canaanite, called Zealot; Judas Iscariot, and Thaddeus. Though the call of all alike proceeded from their Master's grace, we cannot fail to notice those personal qualifications which He Himself condescended to own and use in his service: the firm faith of Peter (the *Rock*); the energy of the sons of Zebedee, whom He surnamed Boanerges (*Sons of Thunder*), united in John with that spirit of love that made him the beloved disciple; the fraternal and friendly affection of Andrew and Philip; the devotion and guileless sincerity of Nathanael; the self-sacrifice of Matthew; the practical godliness of James, and the firm resolve of his brother John to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints"; and, at the opposite extremity of the moral scale, that love of the world, which made Judas Iscariot an awful example, that even one of those chosen by Christ to live with Him and hear His word could yet betray his Master,

and prove to have been all along "a son of perdition"—for "He knew from the beginning, who should betray Him."

Having appointed the twelve disciples, and conferred upon them the Holy Spirit, by which, in His name, they were instructed to teach and heal the sick, Christ withdrew from before the multitude, and taking his beloved messengers higher up upon the mountain he there assembled them—after the manner of Moses when he took the heads of the twelve tribes to Sinai's peak to expound to them the law—and instructed them in the new dispensation which they were to proclaim to all mankind.

Under the eye of God, Christ preached to His disciples "as one having authority," and revealed to their wondering, but no less admiring, senses what they should do in order to produce fruit meet for sinners, and who were really

to be called blessed. Blessed, said He, are those who mourn, are patient, and are those who hunger after righteousness, so are they also blessed who are merciful to others, pure in heart, and they that keep peace among men.

Besides these assurances of happiness through patience and humility, the Lord taught His disciples to practise forbearance and self-sacrifice even in the face of wrongs which they might suffer at the hands of persecutors, for by this they might learn to appreciate the sacrifice which



JESUS SAID TO MATTHEW, "FOLLOW ME."

He was born into the world to endure. His instructions, however, were summed up in the one general law which should constitute the golden text of every Christian's life: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbor as thyself," or "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." He counselled them especially against worshipping after the manner of the Pharisees, who did their good works publicly with the view of gaining the praise of men; but to build their hopes and faith upon the rewards promised by God, who bestows His favors openly upon those who worship Him secretly. He illustrated His counsels by reciting the parable of the wise and foolish builders. The former built his house upon a rock, where the foundation was so secure that neither wave nor wind could move it; while the latter reared his habitation upon the sand, which yielded under the first assaults of the elements and was swept away. The former He likened unto the true Christian, whose foundation was truth

and righteousness and a trust in God, while the latter represented the hypocrite, whose prop was vainglory and the applause of the world.

THE CENTURION'S FAITH IS REWARDED.

While Jesus was preaching in Capernaum, after appointing His disciples, a centurion, or captain of a company of Roman soldiers, sent to Him by some of the Jewish elders asking Him to come to his house and heal a favorite servant who was at the time lying very ill. The Jewish messengers accordingly besought the Lord to do this favor for their friend, whom they pronounced to be a very excellent man, although a Roman, for he had shown great compassion for the Jews and had even built a synagogue with his own money, in which they might worship. The request was at once responded to, but while Jesus was on His way to see the sick man He met other messengers that had been sent on the same errand as the first, who addressing Him, said, "Lord, the centurion has not come himself to ask you this favor, esteeming himself as unworthy to approach your presence; nor does he regard himself so well as to merit your coming to his house, and in his humility, therefore, believing that Thou hast all power in the name of God, he begs that Thou wouldst *will* that his servant recover, being sure that in so doing it would be accomplished."

When Jesus had heard this message, the exhibition of implicit faith astonished Him, and turning to those who were with Him He declared that in all Israel He had not found one who had such belief as this Roman officer. He told them also that at the day of judgment many people of other nations who believed in Him would be saved, while the unbelieving Jews would be lost, since it was neither the forms of worship nor the race that God took account of, but the heart of every man.

When the messengers returned to the centurion they found that the Lord's will had been done, for the sick servant was suddenly made well.

JESUS RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON.

On the day after restoring the centurion's servant, Jesus went to Nain, a small town of Galilee not far from Capernaum. As He drew near to the gate of the city He was met by a funeral party bearing the body of a man away for burial. Beside the body walked a woman violently weeping, whose grief excited such compassion that Jesus stopped the cortege, and approaching the woman, bade her not to weep. She told Him that on the bier was the body of her only son, by whose death she had been left without a staff to lean upon, and praised his virtues in life as only a fond and sorrowing mother could. While she was thus crying, Jesus went to the bier, and taking the hand of the dead boy, said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." Picture in imagination the surprise manifested by the funeral attendants, and the beatific joy of the loving mother, when they saw the dead thus restored, by a word, to life



"THOU GAVEST ME NO KISS, BUT THIS WOMAN HATH NOT CEASED TO KISS MY FEET."

again, the pallor of death giving place to the rosy blush of health and strength! We cannot wonder that all who saw this marvellous sight were afraid, for in the midst of death the soul of the living seems burdened with an affinity for the immortal, and becomes leagued with melancholy. To behold, therefore, life burst forth anew from the dead, and throw off the cerements that already seem heavy with the odor of the grave, would produce a reaction so spontaneous as to convulse the soul. But in another moment the restored young man had spoken, and the spell of fear was broken; a joyful mother springs forward to convince herself that her son is really living, and as she clasps him to her bosom she finds a responsive heart beating measures to her own. And all who saw this miracle praised God.

JESUS IS ANOINTED BY A PENITENT WOMAN.

Some time after the raising of the widow's son, we know not when, for the Bible does not pretend to describe the ministry of Jesus in the natural sequence of events, Christ was invited to share the hospitality of a Pharisee named Simon. This man was somewhat better than the sect to which he belonged, for he was impressed, by what he had seen, that Jesus had about Him many of the Divine attributes, though he could not reconcile His teachings with the Mosaic law, which he still reverently regarded. Thus was the Pharisee in conflict with himself, but he sought to know more of Christ, and therefore invited Him to his house. A sumptuous dinner was provided—which was a feature characteristic with the Pharisees—to which Jesus, the host and other friends sat down; but before the meal was begun a woman named Mary, of Magdala, having heard of the Saviour's presence, came into the room bearing an alabaster box filled with holy ointment. Distinguishing Him at once she fell upon her knees and begged the Lord to have compassion and to forgive the sins with which her soul was burdened. She then washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with her hair, after which she anointed them with the precious balm which she had brought.

The Pharisee, knowing the woman to be a sinner, a lost sheep from the social fold, looked with horror upon what was being done, for it was the Pharisees' boast that they suffered no sinner to touch them. In his heart he therefore said, "If this man is indeed sent of God, he would know that this woman is a sinner, and would have sent her away." Knowing that the Pharisee was revolving these thoughts in his mind, Jesus said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to thee;" whereupon He propounded to the Jew this question: Two men owed another man money; one owed a large sum, while the other's debt was small, but as neither was able to pay any part of his indebtedness the creditor freely cancelled the obligations of both. Tell me, now, which of the two men should be the more thankful? To this Simon replied, Surely, the one whose debt was largest. Thou hast answered rightly, said Jesus. To illustrate his meaning, and teach a practical lesson to the

Pharisee, He called Simon to bear witness to his own shortcomings, for, said Christ, Compare thyself with this woman; I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet; but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Heretofore, possibly in the first two years of His ministry, Jesus had given practical proof of His Divine nature, not only by the wisdom of His discourse, which confounded the rabbis, but by wondrous miracles that fully attested His powers. While many were convinced and sought Him as their Lord, the Saviour, others of the Pharisaic order, and members of what we may term the Temple party, the priests, and arrogant scribes, vain with riches, refused to accept His works as evidence of His Godly nature. Admitting, as they were forced to do, that He healed the sick and cast out devils, yet they vociferously declared that it was not through the gift of the Holy Spirit, but by virtue of a league which He maintained with Satan, which made Him more worthy of death as a blasphemer and necromancer, or witch. For this reason they pursued Him with malice and insult, seeking every way possible to inflame the people against Him.

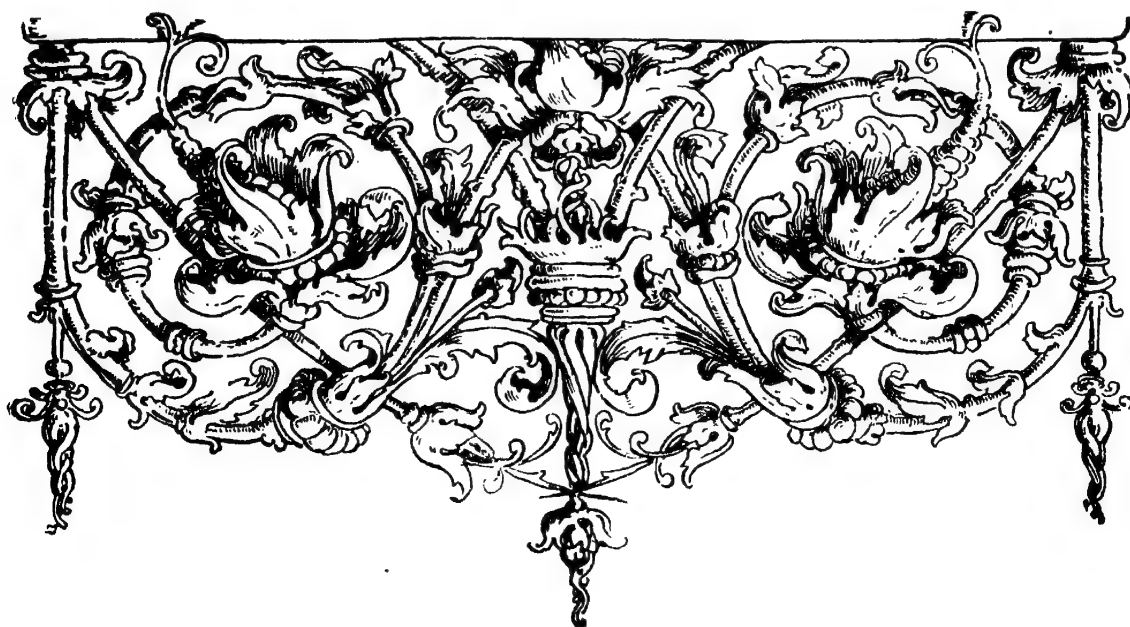
Notwithstanding the taunts, rebukings and revilings of these self-righteous hypocrites, the popularity of Jesus continued to increase, and multitudes poured in upon Him from all parts of Palestine and Syria, and probably from Egypt, Arabia and Rome also. But He now began to change the character of His preaching, and adopted an objective style of teaching, by which he hoped to illustrate His discourse for the more perfect understanding of His hearers. Accordingly, he taught by parables, which are moral truths thrown in attractive colors and distinct outline upon the conscience, like pictures cast upon a screen by a magic lantern. It was, as Beecher so well describes, an instructive form of speech, addressing the imagination and clinging tenaciously to the memory. It was admirably suited to the intelligence of the common people. It had also this advantage, that throughout the east it was a familiar style of instruction. By parables Jesus could advance His views with the utmost boldness, and yet give to His enemies but little chance of perverting His words. It was necessary to baffle their devices, without restricting the scope of His teaching or abating His activity.

On a certain day, it is related, Jesus went and sat by the seaside, but being soon surrounded by a great multitude anxious to receive His instruction,

He went into a boat, and anchoring it a short distance from the shore, delivered to them the parable of the sower. "Behold," said He, "a sower went forth to sow: and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and ate them up; some fell among stony places, where they had not much earth, and forthwith they sprang up, but when the sun was up, they were scorched, because they had no root. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns choked them; but others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred, some sixty, and some thirty-fold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

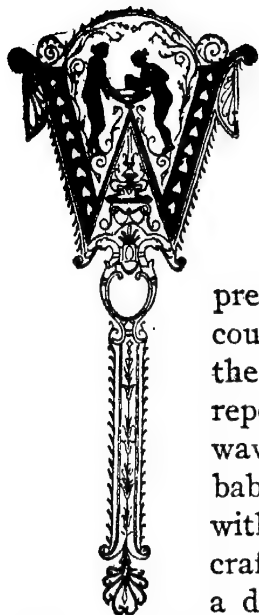
When the disciples asked Him to explain the meaning of this parable, He answered them by likening the sowing of seeds to the teachings of the truth. There are some who hear but cannot understand, and though they may be inclined for a time to believe, yet evil promptings arise to make them speedily forget their obligations to God; others receive the truth with understanding and rejoicing, but after cultivating it for a time succumb to tribulations or persecutions; while yet others, like seed among the thorns, endeavor to receive righteousness and worldly pleasures into their souls at the same time, but which being irreconcilable, righteousness is crowded out to give place to vanity. But the seed that falls upon good ground, is like the teachings of godliness, that find permanent lodgment in the heart and understanding, where, in such goodly soil, they bring forth the fruit of righteousness.

Jesus also gave the multitude other parables, which brought directly home, to them that heard, the lessons which they needed most to learn.



CHAPTER XXX.

JESUS CALMS THE TEMPEST.



WHEN Jesus had given these parables to the multitude He departed in a vessel for the other shore of Gennesaret, accompanied by His disciples and several sailors; but they had not gone far when a tempest arose which grew fiercer until there was danger of the boat foundering. Wearied by preaching so long, and ministering almost night and day to the countless crowds that thronged about Him, He took advantage of the quiet hour afforded on board the little vessel and sought repose. Here He slept, unmindful of roaring wind and lashing wave which rocked Him with the safety that a mother lulls her babe to rest. But there was fear upon those who were cradled with Him; they saw not the hand of God outstretched above the craft, but looked upon the lowering clouds as so many fingers of a destroying demon, moving toward them with relentless fury and a savage fierceness that would pall any save those having a heart filled with abiding faith. Wave after wave dashed over the frail shallop, while deafening blasts rent the sails. With the energy of despair the sailors manned the pumps, but their labor was as futile as though they had been bailing the sea. Hopeless, exhausted, the crew ceased their battling and rushed to where Jesus lay peacefully sleeping, crying, "Master, Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" Did they believe there was a hand to save? No! It was a cry like, Wake, wake, the vessel is sinking; every man now for himself; seize whatever is near that will float, and trust to fate for salvation. But as Jesus awoke, he gazed about for a moment upon the pale faces and hurrying feet of the stricken crew, and without moving from His seat bade the wind cease, and with a calm voice spoke to the raging sea, "Peace, be still." In a moment the elements, obedient to His will, hushed their wild ravings and sunk their white crests beneath a placid surface, while the whispering winds went back into their cavern homes, and "there was a great calm." "And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" In their wonder and thankfulness the crew could make no answer, but looking into each other's eyes they said within themselves, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"



JESUS ASLEEP

DEVILS CAST OUT OF TWO DEMONIACS.

When Jesus passed over Lake Gennesaret, He landed in the country on the east side called Gergasa, where, it appears, the people were awaiting Him. He had scarcely landed when two demoniacs came out of the "tombs," in the language of the Scriptures, but in reality out of their cave dwellings on the hillsides of Gadara, and in fierce words, disputing His way, cried out, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" At that moment a large herd of swine were perceived feeding on an adjacent hill, and the devils besought Him that if he cast them out He would permit them to enter the swine. The request was granted, and immediately the devils left the demoniacs and entered the swine, which,



being thus possessed, ran down the hill and plunged into the lake, where they speedily perished. The swineherds, astounded and angered by the sudden loss of their animals, ran quickly to Gadara and reported what had occurred, which brought out the entire population of the town in protest. They, fearful of his power, begged Him to leave their coast.

We can only understand the importance of this miracle by considering the circumstances under which it was wrought. The Gadarenes were what would have been called "tomb dwellers" at the time, but which have since been classed as *troglydites*, or "cave dwellers." These so-called "tombs" were excavations wrought in limestone rocks, which even to this day dot the hills of that country, known as the mountains of Gilead, and which are about sixteen miles from Tiberias. The people were given to acts of outlawry, so that it was extremely dangerous for a person not well protected to travel through the

country. Their chief pursuit was the raising of swine for which they had infinitely greater regard than for their souls, hence the destruction of the herd of swine was in the nature of a punishment for their cupidity. Jesus found the Gadarenes so densely ignorant, treacherous, and self-willed in their degradation, that He remained in the country but a short while, and returned by ship to the other side of Gennesaret, where he was immediately surrounded by a great crowd anxious to hear His teaching.

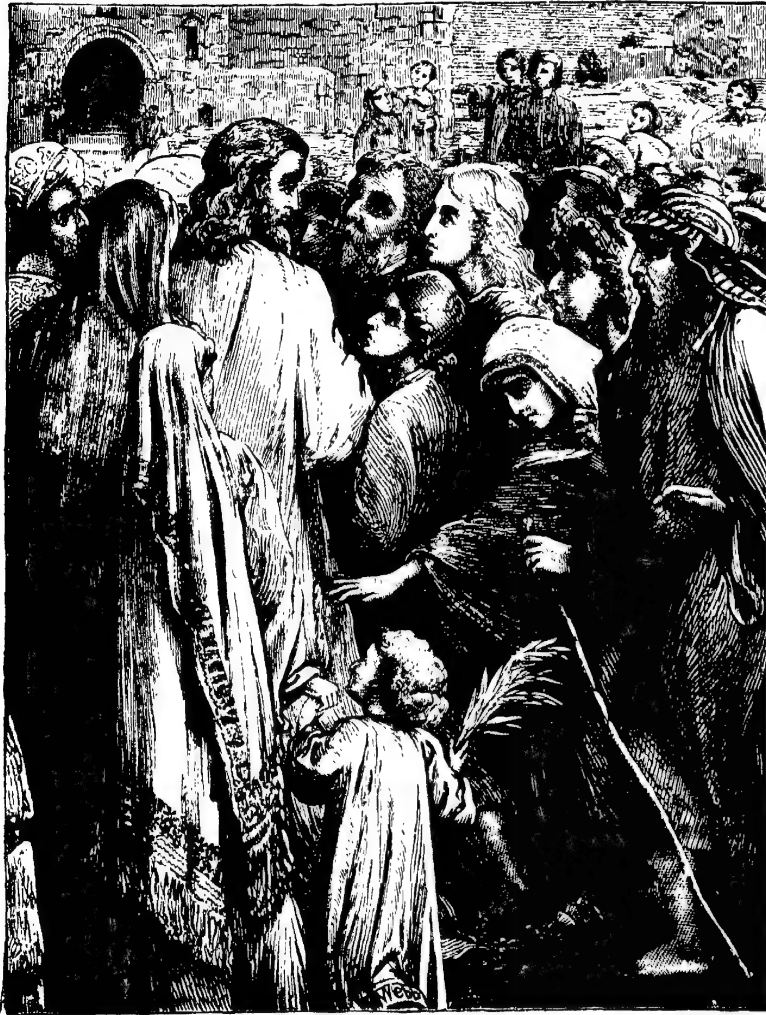
THE RAISING OF JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER.

Scarcely had He touched the beach when one of the rulers, or chief priests, of the synagogue, Jairus by name, came beseeching Him to heal his little daughter, who was at that time lying at the point of death at his house, a little way off. Harkening immediately to the distress call, Jesus started for the priest's house, followed by the throng of people. As he was moving along the way, there came up stealthily behind Him a poor woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years. The exact nature of her affliction is a matter for conjecture, but that her disease was of a most exhausting and painful nature we are assured by the narrative, which tells us that she had suffered many things and had spent all her possessions upon physicians without gaining any relief. She heard of Jesus, of His gentle ways, and the cures which He had performed, and now sought Him; not, however, as one expecting to command His immediate attention, but as a lowly, though faith-inspired aspirant for His grace and favor. Believing in His Divine nature, from whence all goodness emanated, she stole up behind Him and touched His garment, saying within herself, "If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole." Nor was her sustaining faith misplaced, for the moment she had touched Him, the panacea of His holy nature was poured out graciously upon her, and forthwith she felt the rejuvenating, health-imparting influence, and knew that she was made whole.

The moment of the pious contact Jesus knew that some afflicted, but faithful person, had sought His holy catholicon, and turning to His disciples, asked who had touched His clothes. To this they made answer, "Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee and sayest Thou, Who touched me?" The poor woman, with joy in her heart for her restoration, but with tremblings upon her lips, came, and throwing herself at Christ's feet, told Him, in faltering accents, of what she had done, and implored His loving compassion. The confession of her faith and acknowledgment of unworthiness brought forth another blessing from Jesus, who, with fatherly affection took her by the hand and lifting her up said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole."

Scarcely was the woman dismissed when some of Jairus's servants came running to meet him, bringing to his sad heart the crushing news of his daughter's death, and saying, She is dead, wherefore trouble the Master (Jesus) any further?

As Jairus fell to weeping, Jesus bade him dismiss his sorrow and to only believe, for all should be well. Requesting the multitude, to halt and abide in that place, Christ took with Him only Peter, James and John, and following on behind Jairus, He soon reached the house of death and mourning. As He came in at the door, loud lamentations reached His ears, and to quiet the weeping household He asked, "Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead but sleepeth!"



"WHO TOUCHED ME?"

This declaration, instead of abating their grief, elicited only their scorn, for had not the physicians pronounced her dead, and had not the loving hands of mother, sisters and friends felt the cold brow, the hushed heart-beat, and their eyes beheld the pallid face, the seal of death? But Jesus heeded not their rebuke; He bade all go out of the house save the father, mother and His three disciples; then with these He repaired to the death-chamber where the pulseless form of the girl lay under the pail of a winding sheet, awaiting the resurrection call. Jesus went forward, and taking hold of the cold hand, spake, "Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise." Magic voice! Wondrous words! The girl imme-

diately threw back the pall, and responding to the touch of the blessed Saviour, straight-way rose up and walked into the embrace of her mother's arms. Oh! what joy was there in this house; what faith was there awakened, what hope created in the hearts of those who were thus given to know that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the resurrection and the life! Refusing the adulations which the house offered, Jesus charged them to tell no one of what He had done, but to set food before the young girl, for she was hungry.



"DAUGHTER, THY FAITH HATH MADE THEE WHOLE."

JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDE.

Jesus now made a third circuit of Galilee, each time the crowds which followed Him becoming greater. "He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preached the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." The multitude, drawn from every part of Judea, now became so large that He could not talk to all of them, the sea of faces growing every day like waves from a disturbed lake running from a common centre, until His voice fell short of the outer circle. To reach all who were thirsting for knowledge, therefore, Christ told His disciples to go out and preach the word to all people. He had found a fulfilment of His prophecy made to His disciples at Sychar; the spiritual harvest had become too great for the laborers. So, after bidding them to pray the Lord to send forth more laborers, He commissioned them for their work and sent them forth, two by two, to preach. To them He gave power to cast out devils, heal diseases, and bind up wounds. But He charged them not to go among the Gentiles or Samaritans, whose stubborn resistance to God made them like seed sown among thorns, and He also bade them to take neither purse, scrip nor changes of raiment, nor to abide two nights in any man's house, but to rely upon God for their protection. Thus would they be in constant remembrance of their mission, and not be drawn away from the object for which they were called, by temptations of selfish interest. Following these instructions, the apostles went through the towns "preaching the gospel everywhere." "They cast out many devils and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."

About this time news came to Jesus that Herod Antipas, hearing of His wonderful teachings and miracles, and believing Him to be the risen John whom he had so foully caused to be murdered at the solicitation of Herodias, resolved to visit Him. Jesus knew how rankled in the breast of Herod a jealousy which was seeking vengeance upon His head, and to avoid meeting the king He withdrew by ship with His disciples into "a lonely place." Whither He went we are not told, but most probably He retired, as He had frequently done before, to some sequestered spot where He might pour out His soul in prayer, and where He might talk confidentially with His disciples and arm them against the snares laid for their destruction as well as for His own. He was not long in solitude, however, for the multitude sought Him by day and night, giving themselves neither rest nor food, and scouring all the lakeside retreats until He was discovered near the town of Bethsaida. But by this time the long fast to which, in their excitement, they had been subjected, began to tell on them, and there was a cry set up for food. The disciples now asked Jesus to send the crowd away to the towns nearest by, where they might procure food and lodging, but He said to them. "Give ye them to eat." At this command the disciples were much surprised, for they assured Him

that all the food at hand was only five loaves of bread and two small fishes, with which to feed the multitude that numbered five thousand persons. But Jesus knew all this. He ordered them, nevertheless, to divide the crowd into fifties and make them sit down in companies; the order being obeyed, Jesus took up a basket containing the loaves and fishes, and first offering a blessing for the feast, He commenced to divide the bread and fishes and gave the disciples to set before the multitude. Though piece after piece was given yet the supply did not diminish, until at length all that were present had eaten their fill and scattered so much food besides on the ground that when the feast was concluded, twelve baskets of fragments of bread and fishes were gathered up.

At the time of this miraculous feast the Passover was being celebrated at Jerusalem, which Jesus did not attend because of fears, which He very properly entertained, of Herod, Pilate, and the Jewish rulers, who, while acknowledging His miracles, were vehement in their declarations that

it was through the power of Beelzebub alone He operated. The miracle of feeding the people, therefore, possessed a double significance, for, while giving the multitude this heaven-descended food in the desert, the brethren at Jeru-

JESUS PREACHING AND HEALING THE SICK.



salem were eating unleavened bread of human manufacture. The distinction between the observance in Jerusalem and the works which were made perfect through Jesus, was revealed in a subsequent discourse where He showed Himself to be the true bread of life that had come down from heaven.

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA.

After feeding the multitude Jesus sent them away, and ordered His disciples to get into a boat and cross over to the other side of the lake, while He went apart by Himself to pray. It is very affecting to observe how, the more Christ multiplied miracles before His Galilean followers, the further they were from receiving His spiritual teachings. The personal benefits they had now so long been in the habit of receiving came to be everything to them; and the witness which the works bore to Christ was only valued as exciting selfish hopes in them. It was to see and to profit by more miracles that they ran after Him round the lake; and this last wonder of His feeding five thousand men, beside women and children, with five barley loaves, and two small fishes, leaving twelve baskets of fragments to be gathered up, while it convinced them that He was the prophet predicted by Moses, excited proud hopes of independence instead of humble faith in Him, and they were ready to take Him by force and make Him king. On this first mention of such a design, we may well consider what it involved. It was no offer of a peaceful succession, made by a united people. With Judea governed by a Roman procurator, and Galilee held by Herod at the pleasure of the emperor—with factions among the Jews themselves ready to support the Idumean dynasty, and even to cry out, "We have no king but Cæsar"—His consent would have been the signal for a war such as burst out under Nero. And here we may doubtless see one of those occasions in which Jesus Himself was tempted, though without sin. The people of Galilee repeated the offer which Satan had made on the Mount of Temptation; and from Satan it came this time also, though made through them. History furnishes memorable examples of how hard such an offer is to refuse; and that there was a real conflict in our Saviour's mind is proved by His departing alone into a mountain to pray. But first, while He sent away the people, the disciples, who, we may be quite sure, were ready to take the same part, were directed, not without great reluctance, to cross Gennesaret to Bethsaida.

In the lonely watches of the night that followed, Jesus was on the mountain, praying for guidance from the Heavenly Father as to how He should best act for the establishing of God's kingdom on earth. From the eminence of His position He looked out upon the sea and watched the tossing bark in which were his disciples, until toward midnight. A storm had now come up which grew rapidly portentous of evil, until the disciples were in danger of being wrecked; to still their fears, and bring to their minds the assurance of His constant care and protection, Jesus went out to them walking on the angry

waves. Amid the lightning flashes the disciples discerned the form of a man approaching, and seeing that He trod the sea as though walking upon firm ground, they believed it was a spirit and their fears were intensified by what they conceived to be a premonition of destruction. But to their cries of despondency Jesus answered with reassuring words, "Be of good cheer; it is I. Be not afraid." Reluctant to credit their own eyes, Peter desired a proof that it was indeed Jesus, and he therefore cried out: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." To which request Jesus responded by stretching out his hands and saying: "Come." "And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship the wind ceased; then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God."

"And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of Him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole."

THE TRUE BREAD OF LIFE.

When the multitude which Jesus had dismissed had sought for Him a long while, they took shipping and came to Capernaum, where they were rejoiced to find Him again teaching and healing the sick. Their first words manifested the surprise which they felt at seeing Him on the other side of the lake, not understanding by what means He had come across, though possibly conceiving that His transportation had been effected by some miracle. To their inquiry, "Master, when (or how) camest thou hither?" Jesus replied by rebuking them for their selfish interest which prompted them to seek Him. Said He, "Verily, ye seek Me, not because ye love Me, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat (food) which perisheth, but for that meat that endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you."

The people did not understand the true meaning of His words, but influenced alone by their carnal natures, they construed His declaration to mean that He could give them bread which would fortify their bodies against death, hence they besought Him with great eagerness to give them this wondrous life-renewing food. But to this request Jesus replied by saying, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. . . . And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Upon hearing Him declare Himself to be "the bread of life," the Jews were very angry and asked one another, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" To these murmurings Jesus answered by repeating His declaration, and by reminding them that though their forefathers were fed in the wilderness by manna sent them from heaven, yet this food did not prolong the period of their natural lives; but that "the living bread" which he now offered them was the spirit of perfect righteousness made manifest in Himself. "I am the living bread come down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." To their obtuse understanding the words of Jesus were an enigma, but they chose to construe His sayings literally, and argued among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" But to make their surprise even greater Jesus answered them: "Verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him."

Not only were the people confounded by His declarations, but even the disciples were puzzled, and unable to discover the true meaning of His words, asking among themselves. "This is a hard saying; who can hear (understand) it?" Though clothed in the character of a symbol, the true meaning of His words is so apparent that we are astonished at the simpleness of His hearers, though, singular enough, the question then raised as to the verity of the use of Christ's real blood and flesh has caused infinite tears and suffering. In one period of church domination it was esteemed a capital offense to deny that, in celebrating the Eucharist, the wine offered was not the real blood of Jesus, and that the unleavened bread administered was not His real flesh. Men have been burned at the stake for declaring that this wine and bread was but the symbol of Christ's blood and flesh, and represented His spiritual essence.

When Jesus saw that His disciples were averse to an acceptance of the spiritual doctrine, so manifest under the symbol which he gave them, He rebuked their shallowness of heart and mind and plainly declared to them that there were some among them harboring an unbelief. This was quickly proved by several of the disciples deserting Him, until only twelve remained faithful. But among this remnant Jesus knew there was still one whom He could not rely on for faithfulness, and in speaking to the twelve He warns them that "one of them had a devil," evidently alluding, by prophetic foresight, to the reason of Judas Iscariot.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

Among the followers of Jesus during these ministrations we have repeated mention of "the Jews," a term which, in the records of His controversial

teachings, generally denotes the leaders of the two great parties, and more especially the Pharisees and scribes, for the Sadducees seem as yet to have regarded the new teacher with scornful indifference. Many of these came from Jerusalem and Judea expressly to watch Him; and their hatred must have been inflamed afresh by such teachings as that just related. The words of St. John imply that a new conspiracy against Jesus was formed by the rulers at this Passover, for which reason He remained in Galilee six months longer, till the Feast of Tabernacles. Disappointed by His absence, more of the scribes and Pharisees went to meet Him on His own ground; and their fault-finding gave him the opportunity of denouncing their own traditions, by which they annulled the spirit of the law, while adding to its burdensome obligations.

Upon departing from the eastern side of Lake Tiberias, Jesus went up the Jordan, followed by His disciples, until He reached the source of that stream at Cæsarea Philippi. On the way, however, He stopped for awhile at Bethsaida, and signalized His short stay there by miraculously restoring the sight and speech of a blind mute. It was at Cæsarea Philippi that Peter first hailed him as CHRIST, the Son of God, and where Jesus first spoke to His disciples of laying the foundation for His Church in the hearts and affections of His true followers. "From this time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." When Peter had heard Jesus utter this gloomy prediction, his heart sank with fear, and he sought to prevail on the Lord to forego His determination of going up to Jerusalem, where His life would be in such great danger. But Jesus, recognizing in Peter's appeal a new temptation, said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," following this command with an explanation that in doing the will of God He must not consult the weakness of the flesh, as men do who regard only their own comforts, but must be willing to suffer for righteousness' sake, saying, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul."

Six days after this conversation, Jesus called three of His favorite disciples, John, Peter and James, and led them to the top of a high mountain, possibly Mount Tabor, but certainly near Cæsarea Philippi, where He gave them to behold a vision of His heavenly glory. Upon reaching the lofty peak, in the oppressive stillness of nature, which perpetually reigned there, Christ bowed Himself in prayer. What that prayer was we are left to imagine, but this is not difficult, for already He was under the ban of a mortal prejudice and almost beneath the shadow of the cross. Already He knew that His betrayal was near at hand, and we may therefore well suppose that His prayer was—not for strength or courage to bear His sufferings, or for deliverance from a

terrible death—for Divine compassion upon His enemies, and for the remission of the sins of those whose hearts had rejected Him. And as He thus prayed His face and clothing suddenly became illuminated, as if He were clad in bur-



THE TRANSFIGURATION—FROM THE GREAT RAPHAEL PAINTING.

nished armor, upon which the sun reflected a dazzling splendor. As He thus stood, radiant with glory, there appeared, to the astonished gaze of His disciples, the spirit forms of Moses and Elias, and they talked with Jesus, while from out a bright cloud that hovered over their heads came a sweet voice saying, "This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him." Carried away with excitement and righteous fervor at beholding so glorious a vision, Peter said to Jesus, "It is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles (as it had long been the custom among the Israelites to designate holy ground by the building of a memorial of some kind thereon), one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for

" But as Peter was thus speaking the beautiful vision disappeared, and Jesus told His disciples to return to the multitude below that was waiting their coming, but He charged them particularly to tell no one of what they had

beheld on the mountain top "till the Son of Man were risen from the dead." This request they could not understand, for they did not yet know that He would be resurrected on the third day after His death, nor did they, probably, fully believe that He would be offered up after the manner of His own prediction.

As Jesus and His three disciples came down from the mountain they observed a large multitude of people, who were deriding and scorning the nine disciples that had been left behind. But the people left off their abuse as they beheld Jesus approaching, and saluted Him respectfully. Perceiving that there was some disturbance, Jesus asked the scribes the cause, whereupon, before they could make answer, a man spoke, saying: "Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not."

Jesus had before sent out His disciples to preach to all people, and had given to them the power to cast out devils and heal all kinds of sickness in His name, but here, almost at the outset of their labors, nine of these disciples had failed utterly in an attempt to manifest the power bestowed, and, as a consequence, had been made subjects for ridicule by haughty scribes and jealous Pharisees. Jesus was not indifferent to the abuse that was directed against His disciples, but He felt that it was in a large measure deserved, for He knew that their failure was due entirely to the faithlessness of the people and the lack of conviction in the disciples themselves. Since this result was a reflection upon His own nature and power, we cannot wonder that He was chagrined. For this reason He answered the father of the lunatic by a general remark to the whole multitude, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto Me." When the afflicted son was brought into the Divine presence, he fell to wallowing on the ground, foaming at the mouth, and presenting a shocking, but pitiful spectacle. When Jesus asked how long the young man had been thus afflicted the father answered that he had been so since a young child; that in his paroxysms he had often thrown himself into the fire, and into water as well, in his efforts to destroy himself. Jesus was much affected by the sight of the poor lunatic, and no less by the father who besought Him so earnestly for compassion on the sufferer. To inspire him first with hope Jesus said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Though not so fully assuring, the fond father grasped at this small promise and in the emotions of mingled fear, hope and desire, he cried out amidst a flood of tears, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." The crowd came now running and pressing about Jesus, before whom He spoke to the lunatic and drove out the distemper of brain which vexed him. Immediately the sufferer fell again upon the ground and there lay as one dead, until many believed that his life was truly destroyed, for he neither moved nor gave any signs of life whatever. But when he had

thus lain for a time Jesus took the young man by the hand and lifting him up with gracious words, returned him to his overjoyed father, sound in mind.

After this miracle Jesus departed with His disciples, and passed through Galilee by night, lest He might be taken by His enemies. During this journey He again told His disciples that He would soon be delivered into the hands of men who would kill Him, but that after lying dead for three days He would rise again. His disciples, however, did not understand the meaning of His words, but were afraid to ask Him for an explanation.

CHRIST TEACHES FORGIVENESS AND GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE GENEROUS KING.

As they journeyed together toward Peræa, another portion of Judea, north of Galilee, and from thence to Jerusalem, to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, the disciples questioned Jesus on many things important for them to know as preachers of the gospel. Among other questions which they asked was: "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" To make His answer more plain to their poor understanding, Jesus called a little child, and placing it in their midst, told them that little children were greatest in His Father's kingdom, for in the infant there is no sin; therefore, said He, unless ye be converted and become as blameless as little children, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. "Take heed, therefore, that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father." The care of the Father for His children Jesus thus illustrated by citing a parable of the lost sheep: "If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily, I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

Jesus sought to teach his disciples humility by comparing them with little children whose hearts have not yet become corrupted by evils and temptations common to the worldly-minded; but he did not neglect the opportunity to give them practical instruction in their duties toward their fellow-men, and what should be their conduct when assailed by wrongs, calumnies and oppressions. He exhorted them to bear with meekness all the faults of others, and not to attempt by violence the correction of any sin, since it is better to bear a wrong than to take in our own hands the punishment of the wrong-doer. This advice prompted Peter to ask: "Lord, how oft shall my brother (fellow-man) sin against me, and I forgive him? Seven times?" "Yes," said Jesus, "not only seven times, but seventy times seven." In other words, that we should place no limit upon our pardon.

To illustrate more clearly the practical benefits of charity for the faults of others, Jesus gave to His disciples the following parable: A certain king, on taking account of the debts that were due him, found that one of his subjects

had been owing him, for a long time, a large sum of money which he seemed to have made no effort to pay. Enraged at the dishonesty of the man, the king commanded that the delinquent, together with all his family, be immediately sold, and the proceeds applied to the payment of the debt. When the debtor was thus brought to a condition of threatened slavery, he fell down upon his knees before the king and, with tears and entreaties, besought his sovereign to have patience a little while longer, and to spare his family, for their sake, the horrors of enslavement, promising to pay the debt in a short while, if his freedom were not taken away. So strong and heart-moving were the poor man's pleadings that the king's compassion was excited, and he not only gave the debtor his liberty, but cancelled the debt also. Soon after, the forgiven debtor went out and met a fellow-man who owed him a sum of money not above two dollars. Seizing the authority which every creditor then had, this man who had so recently been the recipient of the king's bounty and compassion, laid violent hands upon the throat of his debtor and sought to force immediate payment of the two dollars. The man fell upon his knees and begged for compassion with entreaties quite as moving as the first had uttered to the king, but with different effect, for the hard-hearted wretch stifled the pleadings of his victim and carried him away to prison, there to languish until the debt was paid. The harsh conduct of the unforgiving creditor was presently known to the king, who at once sent for him and said, "O thou wicked man; I forgave the debt which you owed me, because you begged so earnestly for yourself and family, and I had a belief that in your heart there were some honor and charity; but almost at once upon your release you condemn one of your fellow-men to the hardest punishment because he could not pay you the smallest debt." So saying, the king delivered the man over to the tormentors until he should pay all the large debt which had been cancelled.

"So likewise," said Jesus, "shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

HEALING THE TEN LEPERS.

As Jesus and His disciples continued on their journey toward Jerusalem, they came in the evening time to a Samaritan village and sought shelter for the night, but the Samaritans, knowing them to be Jews, denied them entertainment, on which account the disciples became very angry. James and John were particularly vehement in their denunciation of the Samaritans, their anger being increased by the natural hatred which existed between the Jews and Samaritans, and they asked permission of Jesus to call down fire from heaven to destroy those who had denied them shelter. But Jesus rebuked them soundly for their vengeful dispositions, and gave them to understand that his mission on earth was not to destroy men, but to save them. So they turned away from the place where they had been refused entertainment, and went on toward another village. As they were thus proceeding on their way they met ten men

who were all afflicted with leprosy. This disease was so loathsome that those who contracted it were not permitted to associate with the healthy, and were compelled to remain isolated from all other persons, not excepting even their kindred. Therefore, before Jesus had approached very near to them, they drew off and cried out: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us," evidently recognizing



THE ONE THANKFUL LEPER.

Him either intuitively, or from having beheld Him at some of the towns in Samaria during his visits to and miracles in that country. To the cry of the poor lepers Jesus returned answer: "Go, show yourselves to the priests." This order was in fulfilment of the command given by Moses, who ordered that whenever a leper was healed, he should go and show himself to the priest, that he might have permission to associate again among people who were well.

As the ten lepers started away they discovered that they had been suddenly cured of their affliction; only one of them, however, returned to give thanks to Jesus for the benefits He had miraculously conferred, and this one was a Samaritan. Inference, from the text, leads to the belief that

the other nine were Jews, but they hastened away without so much as uttering thanks for their restoration, and thus was Christ able to show to His disciples that a good deed was not to be measured by popular prejudices, but that His mission was to do good to all people, regardless of race, creed, or condition.

JESUS DISCOURSES IN THE TEMPLE, AND RELATES THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

The feeling against Jesus, in all the region about Jerusalem, was so intensely bitter that to escape His enemies, who were setting snares for His



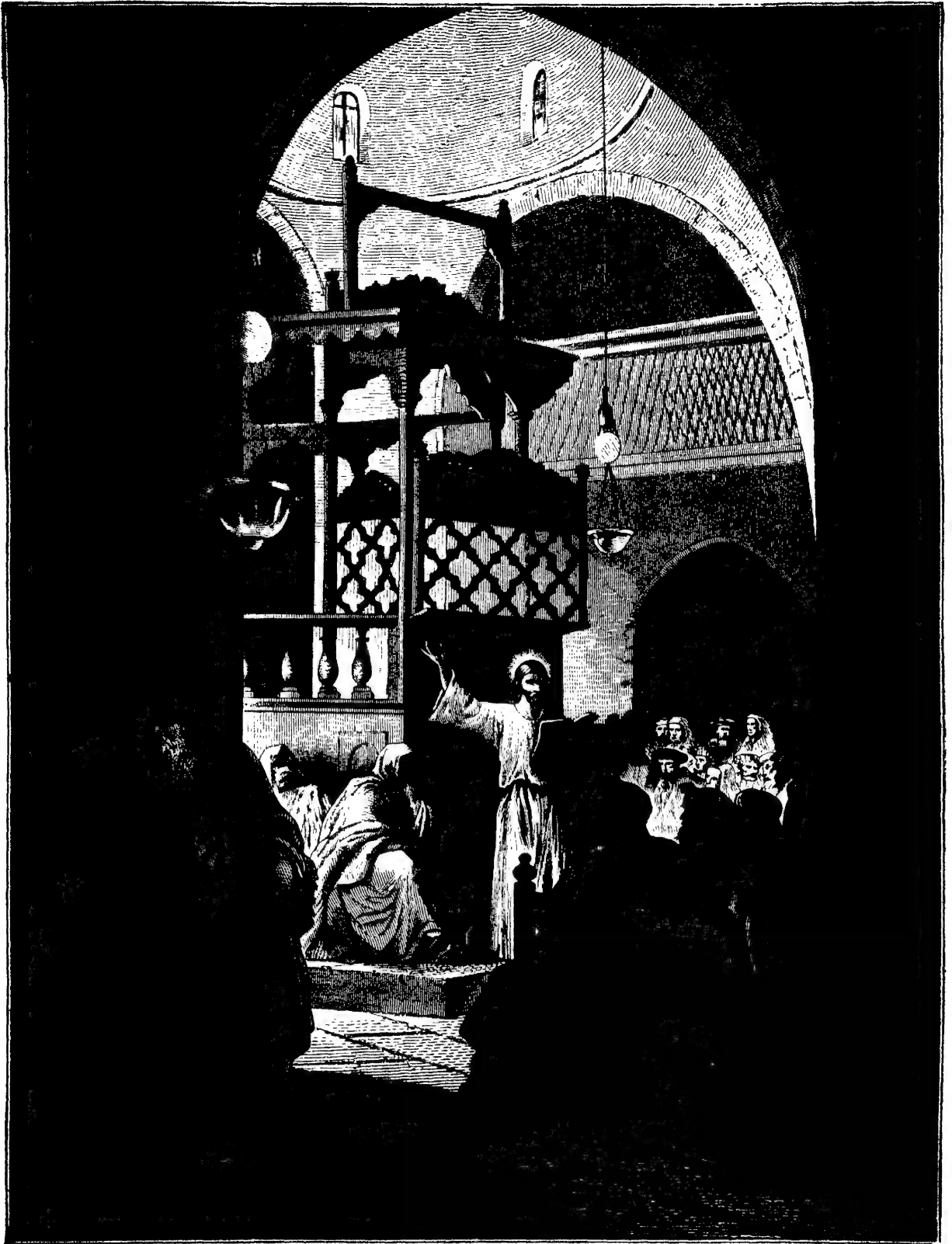
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And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven . . . and when he rose up from prayer: it was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow." Luke XXII 43, 45.



JESUS PREACHING IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

feet, He left His disciples and travelled by a secret way for a short while, until suddenly He appeared in the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. Here were assembled so many of His friends that even the officers dared not lay their hands upon Him. When the congregation had gathered, there were so many anxious to hear Jesus that He consented to talk to them, and thereupon delivered to them a wise discourse, though not in such words as were easily understood by a majority of those present. He told them that His stay on earth would soon be ended, and that it was nearly time for Him to return to the Father that had sent Him. "After I am gone," said He, "you will look for Me, but will not find Me, and where I go you cannot come." To those who believed on Him He gave the glorious promise of eternal life, but those who believed not He declared should die in their sins.

The Pharisees contended with Him and denied that He had power to bestow eternal life, for, said they, "Did not Abraham and all the other righteous prophets die, and do you consider yourself greater than they?" But Jesus explained to them that the life which He had power to bestow was not the life in the body, but in the soul, that spiritual life which endureth in heaven, and which dwelleth evermore with God. The Jews, however, were not pleased with his reply, and being angered at His pretensions would have stoned Him, had He not passed out from them.

Again there was a certain lawyer, appointed probably by the Pharisees, to ask questions, who came to Jesus and said, "Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" To which Jesus answered, "What is written in the law?" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus said, "Thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live."

"But," asked the lawyer, "who is my neighbor?" Whereupon Jesus answered him by relating the parable of the good Samaritan: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when He was at the place, came and looked on him and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise, for all men are our neighbors and our duty is to help all mankind, since we are as one in the Lord.

MARTHA AND MARY.

When Jesus left Jerusalem He went to Bethany, less than a day's journey toward the east, where he was invited by a woman, named Martha, to her house that she might receive His counsel. When the Lord came to the house, Mary, a sister of Martha, received Him, and sitting down at His feet, besought Him to teach her how she might do His will and become entitled to a share in the joys promised the faithful. So engrossed was Mary in a delightful conversation with Jesus that she forgot her duties in the household, so that the preparation for supper was left wholly with her elder sister. Somewhat vexed at this, Martha came in and, rebuking Mary, said also to Jesus, "Lord, dost Thou not care that Mary hath left me to do all the work alone? Bid her, therefore, that she come and help me." But Jesus answered by counselling her not to trouble about the household work, when there were other matters of more importance requiring her attention. The concern of her soul was the better part chosen by Mary, and this care would bring her due reward, for there is consolation in that which can never be taken away.

After this, and before leaving the neighborhood of Jerusalem, Jesus chose seventy disciples in addition to the twelve first appointed, and sent them out to preach the gospel, giving them the power to perform miracles and to do all things in His name. Before going away, however, they asked Him what manner of prayer they should offer to receive the Holy Spirit, to which He answered, Thou shouldst pray after this manner:

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

He admonished them against praying like the Pharisees, who sought the most public places and lifted up their voices to such a pitch as to attract the attention of all who might be near, for this was to gain the favor of man rather than of God. Therefore He bade them to retire into some secret place when they wished to pray, that their minds might be concentrated upon God, whose favor alone it was becoming to desire.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN SIN, AND THE BLIND MAN HEALED.

From the text, although there is no pretension to sequence in the records of His works, it would appear that Jesus returned to Jerusalem from Bethany, and that he again discoursed in the Temple. His teachings continued to attract and favorably influence the masses, which served to increase the jealousy of the Pharisees and scribes, who perceived their own power waning and passing to Christ. Afraid to wreak the vengeance upon Him which they harbored in their hearts, on account of the number of His friends in the

assemblage, they tried to catch Him in technical violations of the Mosaic law and thus hold Him up to the people as a blasphemer, and unworthy of the influence which He exerted. Thus, while He was teaching in the Temple one morning, His enemies brought to Him for judgment a woman who had been caught in the act forbidden by the seventh commandment. Making their accusation against her, they reminded Him that the law of Moses required that such an offense be punished by stoning the offender, and they asked Him to pronounce judgment. The snare in which they hoped to catch Him lay in the fact that, though a violation of the commandment was punishable under the Mosaic law with death by stoning, yet the law had always remained a dead letter, with a very few exceptions during the wanderings in the wilderness. Hence, had Christ insisted on an enforcement of the law now, He must have incurred public odium for rendering so harsh a judgment, while to decide otherwise would subject Him to censure as one who disregarded, or held in contempt, the Mosaic law, which would lay him under the ban of blasphemy.

But between these two dangers Jesus was able to steer with consummate adroitness, without infringing the law or subjecting Himself to criticism for harshness. Stooping down, He wrote with his finger upon the ground, in the Temple court, the law of Moses applicable to the case before Him, after which He rose up and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." This same law which condemned the guilty to death, required the witnesses of the act to cast the first stones, but in the present case the accusers had themselves so frequently violated the same law that they felt the quiet rebuke which Christ had given them and slunk away. When they had all gone away abashed with confusion, Jesus turned to the woman and asked where were her accusers, and seeing no man near to respond, He said, "Since there are none to condemn thee neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

As Jesus was returning on a Sabbath from the Temple to His lodgings at the Mount of Olives, which was on the outskirts of Jerusalem, he met a blind beggar sitting at a gate in His way. The disciples who accompanied Him seem to have first discovered the afflicted man, for they, seeking instruction from the example, asked Christ to whom should the sin which rendered the man blind be laid, whether to his parents or to himself, to which Jesus replied by denying that the condition of the sightless one was due either to his own folly or to the evil conduct of his parents, but revealed to them that it was an instance of God's manner of dealing with those who love Him, in that the blind man had been set in the way that he might bear witness to the power and mercy of God made manifest in the Son; whereupon Jesus took up some clay from the ground, and mixing it with His spittle, made a poultice with which he bound up the blind man's eyes, and then told him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man went away at once to the pool, and when he had washed the clay from his eyelids his heart leaped for joy at finding he had recovered his sight.

"HE THAT IS WITHOUT SIN LET HIM CAST THE FIRST STONE."



The miracle wrought on the beggar became quickly noised throughout Jerusalem, so that hundreds came to see the man and to ask by what means his sight had been restored. To all these questions he replied by a simple recital of the facts, and by giving all the credit to Jesus, though he did not at the time appear to know who Jesus was.

The Pharisees and scribes were quick, as usual, to find something in the gracious act to condemn. Hence they at first said, "This man is not of God because He keepeth not the Sabbath day." But there were others who reasoned on the matter, and who asked, in admiration and surprise, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" Thus there was a division of opinion among the people, which soon grew into a serious dispute. Some of the more vindictive and jealous of the Pharisees refused to believe that any miracle had been performed. They accordingly called the beggar's parents and questioned them, to which inquiries they received assurances that he was indeed their son, and that he had been born blind, but they, afraid of the clamor that had been raised over the miracle, disclaimed any knowledge of how he had recovered his sight, saying, "He is of age; go and ask him." To the blind man himself the Jews next spoke, telling him that to God alone he should give praise, for Jesus was a sinner and a blasphemer. But he, more courageous than his parents, answered, "Whether He be sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." And when the Jews annoyed him with their repetitions as to how he regained his sight, the beggar in turn began to argue that Jesus, by the miracle He had performed, had given proof of His power to do those things which can only be performed by a special gift from God. Said he, "Since the world began was it heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind? If this man were not of God, He could do nothing."

This testimony to the works and goodness of Jesus so incensed the Jews that they laid hands on the blind man and cast him out of the city, and refused him permission to enter their synagogues. Up to this time, though convinced that Jesus was a wonderful man, who must needs have derived this power from God, he did not know, nor did he even suspect, that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But a few days after his rejection by the Jews, he met Jesus, who, accosting him, asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" To which the beggar replied, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him." Then Jesus revealed Himself to him as the one who had restored his sight, and also as the promised Saviour. And the beggar believed on and worshipped Him.

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Many of the Jews were now more kindly disposed toward Jesus, but still they had their doubts, increased by their jealousy, and especially by the persistent abuse heaped upon Him by the Pharisees and scribes. As He was

walking on Solomon's porch, which was the palace in Jerusalem built by that great and wise king, some of the half-believing Jews put directly to Him the question, "If thou art the Son of God, whom the prophets said should come into the world, tell us so plainly." Jesus replied that He had already told them so, but they would not believe, and He therefore gave to them the parable of the Good Shepherd. "Verily I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out, and when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice, and a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." The Jews, failing to understand the meaning of this parable, Jesus explained to them that He was the door of the sheepfold; that whosoever came through Him should become one of the heavenly fold; that He was also the Good Shepherd who would give His life for His sheep, for He knew all His sheep and would bring them safe within the fold at the last day. "Therefore," said He, "doth My Heavenly Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself: I have power to lay it down and to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." This prediction of His death the Jews only partly understood, but His defense of the claims which He set up as to His being equal with God increased their anger to such an extent that they would have seized Him with violent hands, forgetful of the works He had done and the promises made in the parable of the Good Shepherd to protect His flock. But before they could execute their dire intent, Jesus suddenly disappeared from their midst and went away to a place beyond the Jordan where John had baptized.

RAISING OF LAZARUS.

While preaching at the baptizing place of John—possibly where the Saviour had Himself been baptized—Mary and Martha sent Jesus word that their brother, Lazarus, was lying very ill at Bethany, and begged Him to come and minister to him. But though Jesus regarded the two sisters and Lazarus as His very dear friends, He did not respond at once to the call for His services, having a wise purpose in view to prompt Him to delay. He therefore continued preaching in the same place two days longer, at the end of which time He said to His disciples: "Let us go into Judea again." The disciples however, remonstrated against His going again into that country, reminding Him that it was only a short time before the Jews there sought to stone Him and to return now must expose Him to great danger. But Jesus calmed their fears by assuring them that to Him was given the knowledge of what should come to pass, and again by telling them that Lazarus was now sleeping (dead)

and that He must go and raise him out of his sleep (restore him to life), by which He should again give proof to them that He was indeed the Resurrection and the Life.

Thomas, called Didymus, did not receive with satisfaction the assurances given him by Jesus, but his devotion was such that he determined to go with his Lord and, if need be, die with Him at the hands of the hate-inspired Jews. While on their way to Bethany, which was less than two miles to the east of Jerusalem, they learned that Lazarus was already dead, as Jesus had foretold, and had been laid away in a sepulchre for four days. The neighbors had offered such comfort to Mary and Martha as they were able to give, but in the bitterness of their afflictions the two sisters refused all consolation, feeling in



"LORD, IF THOU HADST BEEN HERE MY BROTHER HAD NOT DIED."

their hearts that their beloved brother might have recovered had Jesus responded promptly to their call. As He approached near, Martha was first to discover Him, and running out of the house she greeted Jesus, crying: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatever Thou wilt ask of God, He will give it Thee." Jesus received her kindly and sought to console her with the promise, "Thy brother shall rise again." Then Martha thought that Jesus referred to the resurrection on Judgment day. Mary had not yet shown herself, being oppressed so by grief that she remained closeted, but when Jesus asked for her she

came upon a summons from her sister, and kneeling at the feet of Jesus said, as had Martha, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." The scene was so moving that all those near fell to weeping, mingling their sorrowing sympathy with the profound grief and trustfulness of the two sisters. With eyes suffused with tears Jesus asked where the body of Lazarus had been laid, whereupon they answered him, "Come and see." At this Jesus fell to weeping, thus pouring out His great soul in loving sympathy, which the Jews perceiving, said, "See how He loved him!" And again they asked, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have saved Lazarus from dying?" Jesus, followed by the two sisters, His disciples, and many friends of the deceased, went forward until He came to the sepulchre, which, according to the custom of the

times, was an excavation in the side of a hill before which a stone was rolled to hide the body from view. Among the more wealthy it was customary to fit a stone before the sepulchre and to cement it in such a manner as to exclude the air, after which a private seal was placed on the stone. In the burial of Lazarus it appears from the text that a grave had been excavated, over which a slab was placed which might be easily removed, for the family was too poor to give the body a better sepulchre. As the party reached the grave, therefore, Jesus ordered the covering to be removed; but Martha, whose faith was not so unbounded as she had declared, said: "Lord, Lazarus has been dead now four days, by which time his body must be decayed and offensive." Jesus rebuked her by saying in reply, "Did I not tell thee that if thou wouldst believe in Me, thou shouldst see how great God's power is?" So the stone was removed and Lazarus was exposed, wrapped in his burial garments, with a linen napkin bound about his head, as was the custom of burial among the Jews. Jesus now called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" whereupon he that was dead immediately uprose, with the winding cerements still about him, and stood before the Resurrector with the flush of life full upon him; the grave clothes were speedily removed from his feet and hands, and Lazarus stood forth to thank God and receive the joyful manifestations of his sisters.

The Jews who were witnesses of this wondrous miracle were moved to a confession of Christ, and went away telling it to all whom they met. When the Pharisees heard what had been done they were more jealous than before, gathering together and asking one another what should be done to counteract the influence Jesus was exerting among the people. "If we let Him alone," said they, "all the people will believe on Him and make Him their king. This will arouse the Romans to anger, and Cæsar will send an army into our country to reduce us to subjection." Thus they conspired among themselves to destroy Jesus, and sent emissaries out to make charges against Him.

Caiaphas, the high-priest, who was leader of the rulers, before a council that had been summoned, argued the political expediency of putting Christ to death as a substitute for the whole people, for, he contended, it were manifestly better that Jesus should be executed than that through His influence the people be committed to acts which would invite the wrath of Rome. This proposition came as a prophecy, evidently prompted to utterance by God Himself for His own good reason, though Caiaphas knew not the full measure of his words.

JESUS ESCAPES TO THE WILDERNESS OF EPHRAIM.

On account of the plots formed against His life Jesus retired out of Bethany to the wilderness of Ephraim, whither He was accompanied by His disciples. After remaining in Ephraim a short while He travelled through Peræa, preaching in the villages which lay in His route, and afterwards turning toward Jerusalem, where He should be offered up for the sins of all people. We are not told through what cities His route now lay, but it is evident that

He chose a populous district, where He would be sure of large audiences, and where also the people were inclined to give ear to His teachings.

As He was preaching in one of the synagogues on a Sabbath, He perceived an old woman in the audience who was afflicted with what had been pronounced an incurable disease, for a period of eighteen years. Walking was extremely painful to her; yet, so anxious was she to see Jesus, that the burden of her affliction and the pangs which shot through her feeble body with every movement of her limbs, did not restrain her from going to the synagogue, though she had entertained no hope of being cured by the Great Physician. Seeing that she was concerned chiefly about her soul, Jesus called out to her, saying, "Woman, thou art made well of thy sickness." He afterward laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was restored to perfect health and began praising God.

The ruler of the synagogue, however, was very angry at Jesus for having performed this good miracle on the Sabbath day, for, like all others of his class, he was a stickler for the Mosaic law in its literal construction, giving no regard to the spirit and intent of the law-giver. Jesus administered to him a stinging rebuke, to which the ruler could make no reply: "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you, on the Sabbath, take his ox or his ass from the stable and lead him out to water him? And if it is right to do what is needful for the ox or the ass, is it not right that this woman, who has been suffering for eighteen years, should be made well on the Sabbath day?"

PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER.

And Jesus now spoke many parables to the people, for He saw that they could comprehend His teachings more readily by giving them practical illustrations and bringing the moral of each directly home to their understanding. Thus, on one occasion, while He was visiting at the house of a chief Pharisee, who was almost persuaded and yet not quite willing to give over his worldly way of living, Jesus related the parable of a man who had provided a great supper: When the table had been made ready for a large number of invited guests, the host sent his servants out to bid those who had been invited to come to the feast, but one after another made excuses, assigning as many reasons as there were guests invited, why it was inconvenient for them to accept. The man was very angry when he found that none of those whom he had asked to dine with him would come to his feast, but that the victuals provided might not spoil, he ordered his servants to go out quickly again into the streets and to invite every person they might meet, particularly the poor, lame, and blind. When the servants had thus brought in a great number of unfortunates, the man found that there was still room for many more at the table, and he accordingly ordered his servants to go out again and invite as many more as his tables would accommodate, but he enjoined them not to bring any one of those whom he had first invited, for he declared that now



"WOMAN, THOU ART MADE WELL OF THY SICKNESS."

they should not taste of any of the meats and good things that he had prepared. By this parable Jesus impressed His hearers with the means God had provided for salvation. The man who had made the feast was God himself, whose servants were the ministers of the gospel. These had first invited the Jews, but as they would not come, the invitation had been extended to all people who would receive His teachings, regardless of their poverty and infirmities.

PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

There was a certain man who had two sons; the younger of whom, having grown to manhood's estate, came to his father and asked for his share of the inheritance, that he might go out into the world and henceforth pursue his own way. Accordingly, the father made a division of his property and gave the younger son his share. The young man, having a large sum, and reckoning nothing of how it had been accumulated, so that he knew not its value, went to a far country and there, instead of wisely investing his inheritance, entered upon a course of riotous living whereby his substance was soon squandered, and he was left friendless and in poverty. His misfortune was greatly increased by reason of a famine which now prevailed in the land to which he had travelled, so that he was in danger of starving. To appease his growing hunger the young man engaged himself as a swineherd, and while attending his charge he sought to stay his craving with the swill and grain upon which the hogs fed.

In his reduced condition the prodigal began to think of the conduct which had brought him to this sorry plight, and, though appreciating his faults, he thought of the care and comfort which the servants of his father had, and of the bread they had to spare, with plenty abounding on every side of them. So he resolved to return to his father, acknowledge his faults and his unworthiness to be called the son of so good a man, and to beg that he might be permitted to engage as one of his hired servants. Carrying this resolution into effect the young man left the land of famine, and after a long time of journeying, and innumerable hardships, he came at last within sight of the old homestead. Ragged, dirty, emaciated by hunger, begrimed with dust of the road, unshorn, and misery written in every feature, yet the returning prodigal was not without recognition; for even when he was yet a great way off his father recognized him; not in the soiled clothes, unkempt hair, and beggarly garments, but in that fatherhood which knows its own by voice; yea, by intuition. And perceiving that it was his son, the forgiving father ran out to meet him, and when he drew near he fell upon the boy's neck and with kisses, and tears of compassion, welcomed him back with a joy which the heart may feel but tongue cannot express.

Overcome with shame for his unworthiness, the erring son freely confessed his sin, and begged that he might be received only as a servant, which humble place he did not even deserve. But the rejoiced father made no other reply

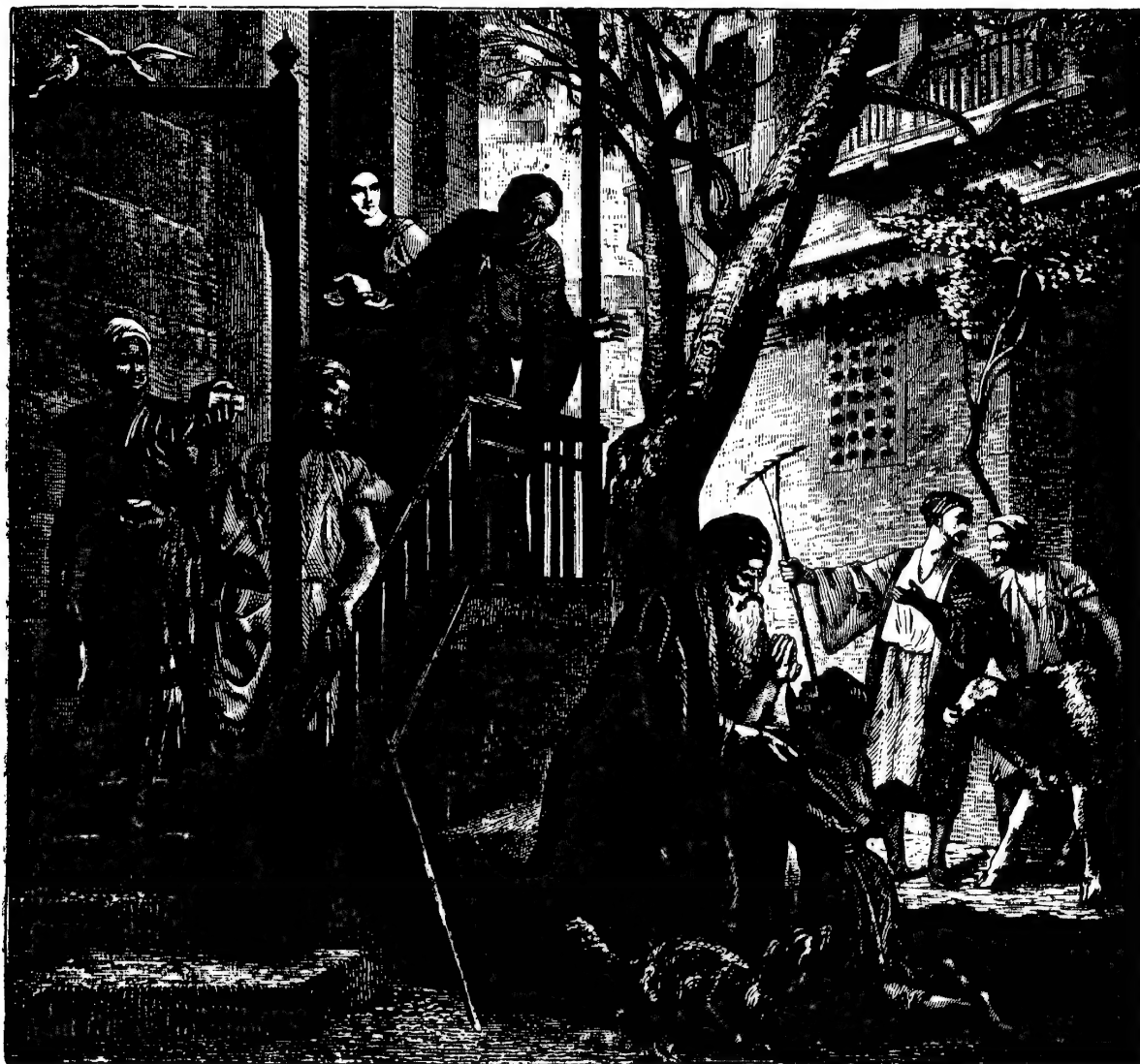
than to order the servants to bring quickly the best robe with which to adorn him, in place of the tattered raiment that disfigured his precious body; to put a ring upon his hand and shoes upon his feet; "and bring hither," said he, "the fatted calf, and kill it: and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was lost and is found again." So then a general rejoicing began among the servants and family, and there was music and dancing and laughter, until the noise



DEPARTURE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

reached the elder brother, who was out in the field. Wondering what was the cause of this great jubilee he came hastily toward the house, and meeting a servant eagerly inquired of him what it all meant. To this the servant answered, with some show of pleasurable excitement, "Thy brother has come! and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound!" Stung with jealousy, because of the marked favors bestowed

upon his brother, while he himself had not even been invited to the welcoming, the elder one refused to go in, whereat his father came out and entreated him to give over his jealousy and extend a brotherly hand of greeting to him who had been lost. But he answered, "Father, for all these many years of my life have I served thee faithfully; neither have I at any time wilfully disobeyed



RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

any of your commands; and yet you never gave me so much as a little kid with which I might make a feast for my friends; but so soon as my brother returns, after squandering his inheritance in every form of wanton riot, you receive him with such display of affection as you never bestowed on me, and have killed for him the fatted calf, that should have been reserved for a more deserving feast."

Though all the elder son had said was true, the good and loving father was all the more pained, and with beseeching speech he prevailed with his jealous son, saying: "Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

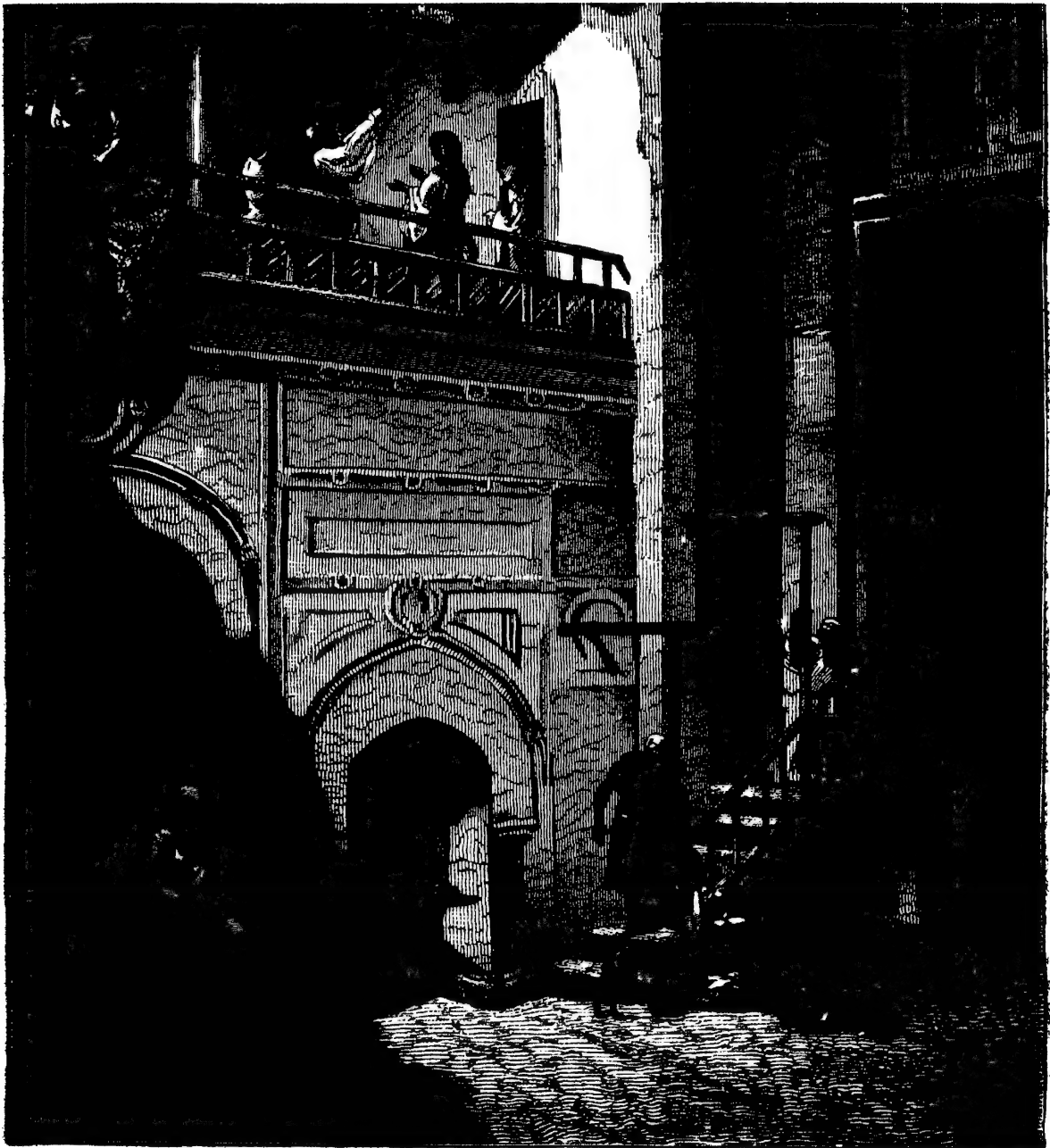
By this parable Jesus illustrated the compassion of God, and the joys of His Heavenly Father when any that are lost in sin shall renounce the evil of their ways and return to Him, the source of all love; for the good He has always with Him, hence that greater joy must be manifest when the evil are reclaimed.

PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

The Pharisees, though outwardly affecting great respect for the Mosaic law, praying loudly in public places to excite popular belief in their great piety, were at heart base, treacherous, selfish, and above all, given to every manner of luxury which wealth could provide. To picture these faults in unmistakable colors, that would expose them to themselves as well as to His followers, Jesus related another parable, as follows: There was once a very rich man, who, having no care for further acquisition, or heed for those less blessed than himself, spent his time dressing with fastidious care in the finest of linens, to be admired of men, and in dining with such sumptuousness as to excite the envy of his neighbors. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who, covered with sores and other afflictions which rendered him helpless, was laid by his little more favored friends at the rich man's gate that, perchance, he might subsist off the crumbs thrown to him by the servants from the great feasts. While lying thus exposed, and dependent upon a doubtful charity, the poor man was visited by dogs, that came to lick his sores, and which were alone lowly enough to be his companions. But soon the despised unfortunate died, and the touch of grief never once swept across the strings of the human heart, but in heaven there was a tear of pity wept, and there was the minstrelsy of rejoicing, too, at a soul released from its sorrowing tenement: and so angels came to carry away the soul of Lazarus, where it might repose in the bosom of an unspeakable delight, wrapped in the mystery, but goodness, of God.

And soon the rich man also died; and there were wailings over the costly cerements which hid his poor body of senseless clay; dirges of music flooded the room wherein he lay, and floated out among the naves and lofty arches of the great palace, to an assemblage that had come to pay its last homage to the rich man. And now the crowd divided to permit a passage for the pall-bearers as they filed solemnly by, carrying the body to its final bourne, an imposing sepulchre carved out of the rock, where neither thieves nor prying eyes could penetrate. But while all this pomp and circumstance of wailing, homage and burial was being enacted, the soul of Dives was already in another world paying the penalty of a wasted life. From out the sleep of

death the rich man was awakened by the torments prepared for the wicked, and as he raised his eyes in agony, lo! afar off he saw the spirit of Lazarus in the arms of Abraham, revelling in the joys of righteousness; and Dives



LAZARUS BEFORE THE RICH MAN'S DOOR.

cried out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." But to this appeal Abraham could only answer, "Son,



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CHRIST BEFORE PILATE.

"He brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat. . . . But they cried out, 'Crucify Him.'" John XIX. 13, 15

AVUL COLTIER PHILA

remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, while Lazarus, in all the misery of his poverty and afflictions, was suffered to remain at thy gate without attention either from thee or thy servants. Now, he is in paradise, and thou art in the torment of the selfish and worldly-minded. But even were Lazarus disposed to respond to thy cry, there is a wide gulf between thee and him, which no soul may pass, either to go or come."

Upon hearing this, Dives besought Abraham that he might send one from the dead to warn his five remaining brothers against the sins which had brought him to this place of torment; but the prophet answered that so engrossed were they in the evils which wealth provokes, and so wedded to the course of a luxurious and selfish life, that even if one were sent from the dead to tell of their folly and danger, yet would they not repent.

THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.

Jesus re-enforced His illustrations of Pharisaic hypocrisy by relating another parable, no less appropriate at the time, and quite as applicable to the present age: Two men went up into the Temple to repeat their prayers according to their customs, one of whom was a Pharisee and the other a publican. The former, arrayed in rich raiment, which was a mark of his vanity, stood in an open place, and thus poured out his selfish cant and boasting: "O God, I thank Thee Thou hast not made me as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican, who comes also at this time to offer up his petitions. I am more devout than other men, and fulfil the law, because I fast twice each week and give the tenth of what I possess to the support of the Temple service; therefore am I deserving of all Thy favors." The publican, however, entertained no selfish motives, nor did he seek to justify his actions before God, but realizing how much he owed to his Maker, and the unworthiness of every man before God, humbled himself and cried out, in his desire to be made better, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." "I tell you," said Jesus, "this publican was justified rather than the Pharisee; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

THE RICH YOUNG MAN.

Scarcely had Jesus ceased speaking to them these parables illustrating the vanity of riches, when there came running to Him a young man, who, kneeling at the Lord's feet, asked, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" To which Jesus answered, "Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but One, that is God." Though He knew that the young man was insincere in his professions to humble himself or to forsake the luxuries and follies which his inherited wealth had accustomed him to, Jesus yet condescended to answer him, rather for the example which He might make to those about Him. Thus said He: "Thou knowest the commandments; hast thou observed all these?" "Yea," replied the young man, "I have obeyed all

of these from my youth." Jesus now looked upon him with compassion, for He knew that the harder sacrifice had not been made, and hence the observance which the young man confessed was in letter rather than the spirit of self-denial and worshipful heart. Jesus therefore said to him: "One thing thou lackest yet: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the



"AND THE YOUNG MAN TURNED AWAY SORROWFULLY."

poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross and follow Me." But the young man was grieved to hear these hard conditions, for he was very rich, and turned away, for he would not accept them.

Thus was an example in real life offered, whereby Jesus was able to show to his disciples the persistency with which a man will cling to his worldly

possessions, even though it be at the sacrifice of his soul. Therefore those which are first in this world, honored of men for their accumulations and the vain-glorious display which they make to excite praise, shall be last in the Kingdom of Heaven.

While Jesus was thus teaching, many of the people who accepted him as the promised Messiah brought their little ones and begged that He might lay His hands on their heads and bless them. As the crowd pressed forward the disciples rebuked those who had brought their children, and bade them go away and cease interrupting the Teacher, whose mission was among men. But Jesus was angered by the rudeness of His disciples, and cried out to them and the waiting mothers as well: "Let the little children come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." And He took up the prattling babes in His loving arms, and laid His dear hands upon the heads of others and blessed them.

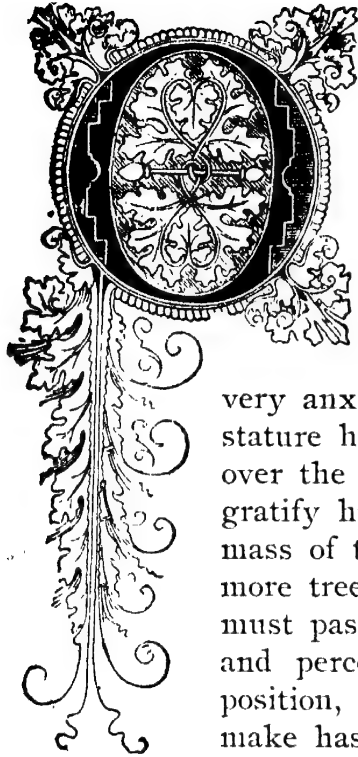
PARABLE OF THE LABORERS.

And He spake another parable saying: The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers to work in his field. The first men whom he met agreed to work for him for the wages of one penny per day. These he engaged, and then went into the market place and hired others, but without stipulating what he should pay them. Each hour of the day, from the first to the eleventh, the man went through the streets and engaged men to work in his fields, saying to each, "Whatsoever is right I will pay you." When the day was done he ordered his steward to call all the laborers and pay them their hire, beginning with the last engaged. Therefore those that were engaged at the eleventh hour were paid first, and each man received a penny. Seeing how liberal the man had been to those who had not worked above one hour, those who worked twelve hours expected to receive a sum proportionate to the time of their service, but upon receiving their pay they found that they, too, had received only the penny for which they had agreed to work. Thereupon they bitterly complained of their employer's injustice, saying, "These whom you first paid have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, which have borne the burden and heat of the entire day." But the man reminded the complainants that he had fulfilled his promise, and that they had no right to charge him with injustice when he had paid them the sum which they freely engaged to work for. "Is it not lawful," said he, "to do what I will with mine own?"

This parable was recited to illustrate the character of God's mercy; that the promise of eternal life was held out to all men, and that there were no measures of glory whereby men should be rewarded in proportion to the length of their service in God's vineyard; but that all who were absolved from guilt, through the acceptance of the Holy Spirit, even if the change from sin to righteousness were made within the last hour, yet the reward was as great as the mercy of God could make it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

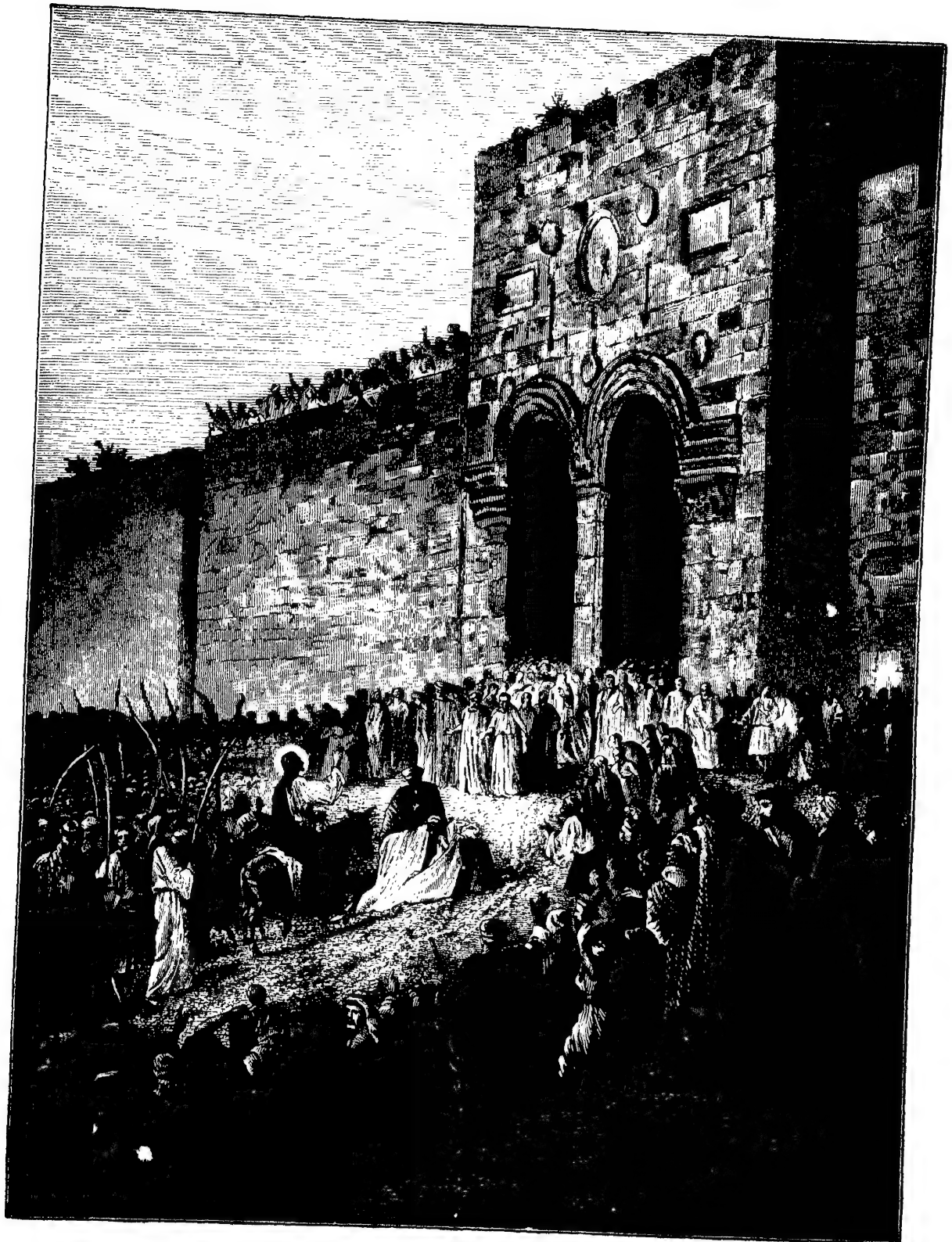
ZACCHEUS ACKNOWLEDGES CHRIST.



ON His journey toward Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover, Jesus passed through Jericho, followed by a vast concourse of people, some being attracted by curiosity, whilst others were become worshippers and became His followers because of their steadfast faith. There was a certain rich man in Jericho, named Zaccheus, who held the office of chief tax-gatherer, a place of appointment under the Roman government. This man, having heard much concerning Jesus, became very anxious to see Him, but on account of his extremely short stature he could not catch even a glimpse of the Divine Master, over the heads of the taller people who made up the crowd. To gratify his curiosity, therefore, Zaccheus ran before the moving mass of the people, and climbed up into the branches of a sycamore tree which he knew stood in the path over which Jesus must pass. When the Saviour approached near, He looked up and perceiving Zaccheus, knowing also the reason of his lofty position, addressed him in a kindly manner, saying, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for I must abide at thy house to-day." The spirit of faith was immediately made manifest in Zaccheus, who, answering the summons, said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." This speech was an acknowledgment of the Messiahship, for Zaccheus well knew what implacable hatred the Jews felt for the tax-gatherers, and knowing Jesus to be a Jew he sought to make amends for any of his misdeeds and oppressions as a publican, that he might have the favor of Him who had already been hailed as "King of the Jews." The people, however, complained that Jesus was putting Himself upon an equality with a chief of sinners, for they could not conceive how one so odious to them, as a tax-gatherer, could be moved by any good intentions. But Jesus saw the earnestness and faith of Zaccheus, and assured him of His favor by saying, "This day is salvation come to this (thy) house" (or the house of Abraham).

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

As he was going out of Jericho He passed a blind beggar by the wayside, who, hearing that Jesus was passing, cried out, "Jesus, Thou Son of David,



JESUS ENTERING JERUSALEM AMID HOSANNAS.

have mercy on me." The disciples, as well as many others, besought him to be still, but the blind man only called out the louder, until Jesus requested that he be brought to Him. When the unfortunate was in the Divine presence and questioned as to his desires, he begged that he might receive his sight, whereupon Jesus said to him, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." And immediately he received his sight and followed after Jesus.

As the great concourse of people came near to Bethany, Jesus rested at the Mount of Olives, and sent two of His disciples into the village of Bethphage (town of figs), with instructions to bring to Him a colt (ass) which they would find tied at the village gate, and upon which no one had yet ridden. The two accordingly set out for Bethphage, and when they reached the gate they found, as the Lord had told them, a young ass, but as they were unloosing the animal, the owner appeared and demanded to know why they were taking the ass without so much as asking his leave to do so; to which they replied, "The Lord hath need of him." We are led to believe from the fact that no opposition was made to the disciples' action, that to the owner was revealed the true purpose for which his animal was needed, and he no doubt joined the crowd that was following Jesus up to Jerusalem. When the ass was brought, some of the disciples placed their garments upon its back and mounted Jesus thereon, while others spread their clothes in the path for Him to ride over. Thus the journey was resumed, and as the crowd moved forward from the Mount of Olives they set up such rejoicings as were never before heard in that sacred place. Hosannas were sung and shouts of praisegiving rent the air: "Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." Some of the Pharisees objected to this adulation, even of one so worthy of praise, and asked Jesus to repress the outbreak of noisy glorification; but to these requests He returned the reply: "I tell you, if these people should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out in praise."

As Jesus approached within view of Jerusalem, the sad future of that splendid city arose before him, and with prophetic vision He saw it lying in ruins, its destruction to be wrought as a punishment of the people for having rejected the day of grace. Just as this affliction might be, Jesus was none the less sorrowful, and He wept while contemplating the woe which was foretold to Him should come to those who were His persecutors.

Entering into Jerusalem and the Temple, He still met with the same reception, the people crying, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee!" and coming to Him in the Temple to be healed. What most incensed the chief priests and scribes was to hear the *children* crying in the Temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David;" and, as before, they asked Him to silence them; but He only reminded them of David's words, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." In the evening He returned to Bethany.

PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD.

Day after day the multitude which came together to hear Jesus continued to increase, until both the Temple and court were filled to overflowing. In addressing the scribes and Pharisees He usually confined Himself to an expounding of the law, but to the great majority He discoursed in parables which brought His teachings into bold relief to their simple comprehension, and thereby gave them practical demonstrations of the truths He proclaimed. Thus He recited the parable of the vineyard:

There was a certain land owner who planted a vineyard upon his lands, and fenced it against depredations from roaming herds. He also built a wine press and suitable buildings for housing the workmen and caring for the vintage. Having thus prepared the soil and planted it, he let the lands to certain husbandmen, and leaving servants to collect the rents, he made a journey into a far country.

When the fruits were ripe the land owner's servants went to the husbandmen to demand the money which was due, but instead of the tenants making payments as they had agreed, they seized the rent collectors, one of whom they beat, another they stoned, and murdered another. Other collectors were sent to collect the rent, but they were likewise brutally treated and received nothing. At length the land owner's son went in person to request payment of the money that was due, but when the wicked husbandmen saw him coming, and knew his errand, they said to one another, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance. And they caught and slew him, and threw his body out of the vineyard."

Having related this parable, Jesus asked His hearers what the landlord should do when he returned and learned how the husbandmen had treated his servants? And He explained to them that the landlord was God, and the husbandmen were those who had done evil to His servants in the world's vineyard; while the son whom they murdered, was Himself, for it was the intention of the wicked to kill Him because He was the heir, sent about His Father's business.

PARABLE OF THE WEDDING FEAST.

And He gave them another parable, wherein He likened the Kingdom of Heaven to a certain king who desired to celebrate the wedding of his son. This king prepared a great number of invitations which he sent out by his servants, that his friends might come and make merry with him in his hour of gladness. But none of the persons invited responded, whereupon he sent his servants for them, bidding them to say to those whose company he requested, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." But they refused the invitation and went about their business affairs, indifferent to the king's wishes and commands. This treatment so offended the king that he sent his army to

punish those who had insulted his servants and disobeyed his orders. Having done this he bade his servants go out again upon the highways and to summon to the feast all the people they could find, whether good or bad, for the baked meats must be eaten.

By this general invitation a very large number of guests were brought in who made merry with the king. Among those who had thus come to the feast, however, was one who had not prepared himself with a wedding garment, and being discovered by the king he was commanded to tell why he had not observed the requirements of every guest at a royal marriage feast. The unfortunate man, not being able to furnish an excuse for his negligence, hung his head in shame, whereupon the king commanded his servants to seize and bind him, and to throw him out, for he was unworthy to be of the company invited.

In this parable God was represented as the king who had prepared the wedding feast, and the son was Jesus Himself, whom the Father desired to honor. Those first invited were the Jews that rejected Him, and those afterward brought in from the highways were the people of other nations who would receive His teachings and fulfil the law of righteousness. The man who neglected to provide himself with a wedding garment represented the hypocrite, who, while outwardly appearing like a true believer, was at heart without faith, and therefore unworthy of Christian fellowship.

THE POOR WIDOW'S MITE.

While Jesus was preaching in the Temple, He perceived how the people made their contributions for the purchase of sacrifices, and for defraying the expenses of the Temple services. Large chests were provided, in the top of which an aperture was made to receive coins; into these the people, both rich and poor, deposited such sums as they were pleased to contribute. Some of the very wealthy made a display of their riches by depositing large sums in the presence of persons who, they were sure, would publish their great charity. Among the contributors Jesus observed a poor widow approach the box and, with trembling hand, deposit two mites—equivalent to one cent of our money—which was all that she had. Jesus now called to His disciples, and taught them a lesson in true charity, no less valuable to us because it is old. Said He: "Verily, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who had made their contributions to the sacred treasury; for, while others gave of their abundance, she cast in all that she had, even to the last means of her living."

DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE FORETOLD.

Every evening, after the teachings of the day were finished, Jesus went either to Bethany or the Mount of Olives to pass the night. On returning to Jerusalem one morning, Jesus addressed His disciples on the glory and magnificence of the Temple, which, builded by the hands of man, must, like

all other human creations, perish in the mutations of time. He, therefore, told them that the day was coming when this beautiful house of worship would be demolished and of the ruins there would not be left so much as one stone upon another, but all its materials would be scattered wide apart. This prophecy alarmed the disciples, and when Jesus again returned to the Mount of Olives they began to question Him when these things should come to pass, for they believed He referred to the time when the world itself should be destroyed. Without correcting this impression, though His forecast of the Temple's destruction referred to the capture and sack of Jerusalem in the wars which should be waged, He improved the occasion to prepare them for some of the momentous events which must occur, by which not only the Temple, but themselves also, would fall by the violent hands of the Lord's enemies. Said He: "Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in My name, saying: I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

To impress them more forcibly with the meaning of this prophecy, and the need of every man to prepare himself in the days that are allotted him for the call to judgment, Jesus gave them a parable in which He compared the Kingdom of Heaven to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet a bridegroom. In those days it was customary, after a marriage had been celebrated at the bride's house, for the bridegroom to bring his new spouse to his own home, in the early hours of the night, conducted by a procession of his friends. As the procession approached, another came out to meet and congratulate the wedded pair, bearing in their hands lamps, or torches, as the symbols of the light of friendship to guide them in the path of life. In the parable that Jesus gave, he represented five of the virgins as wise, and five that were foolish. The former filled their lamps with oil before starting out to meet the bridegroom, besides carrying a quantity of oil with them to fill their lamps anew when they should be exhausted; but the latter were so neglectful that they took no other supply than that which was already in their lamps. At midnight, while waiting the expected procession, a mes-

senger came, crying, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Then the ten virgins rose up and trimmed their lamps, and prepared to receive the twain, but the five foolish virgins found that their lamps had now no more oil in them, and they therefore begged of their five wise companions a supply that they might light their lamps and thus meet the bridegroom and participate in the feast of congratulation. But the five who were wise answered: "Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." And the five that were foolish hastened away to procure oil to fill their lamps, but while they were gone the bridegroom came, and the five wise virgins, with those that had accompanied them went into his house and shut the door against any others that might want to enter. When the five that were foolish returned, with their lighted lamps, they found entrance to the feast denied them, and though they cried, "Lord, Lord, open to us," yet the bridegroom hearkened not to their pleadings, and declared he knew them not.

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

And Jesus spoke another parable to illustrate the duty which every one owed God, according to the abilities and advantages which he may possess: A certain rich man, having occasion to visit a far country, called his servants together and charged them what they should do until his return. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to a third only one talent, charging them to make profitable use of the sums committed to their care and to employ the money wisely until his return, for he would demand of them an accounting.

When the master was gone, he who had received the five talents cast industriously about for means to invest the sum which had been intrusted to his judgment, and soon found such profitable investment for his five talents that he gained for his master five other talents. The second servant was no less successful, for he used the two talents given him so wisely that he, too, doubled his fortune. But the third servant, being jealous of the preference shown for his two fellows, was indifferent to the interests of his master, and instead of seeking an investment of the single talent intrusted to him, went and buried it, and spent his time in idleness until his master's return. When the rich man returned he called his three servants and demanded of them a report of how they had employed their time and the money intrusted to them during his absence. Whereupon the first servant said: "Master, thou gavest me five talents, which I used so wisely that I have gained as many more; and here are the ten talents which I therefore bring to thee." And the second servant answered in like manner, and brought to his master four talents, having gained as much more as had been intrusted to him. But the third servant, with shame and regret, could only say: "Master, thou art a hard man, and fearing thy anger should I lose what had been given me to use, I buried it in

the ground, and there kept it safely till thou shouldst return. Therefore I now bring it to thee."

The rich man now rewarded each according to his deserts. To the first two he said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servants; since you have been faithful to me in this, I will promote you to the care of greater things, and you shall sit with me on my right hand." To the slothful servant he said: "Since thou hast been unmindful of my interests, and wasted thy time in idleness, thy punishment shall be in losing that which was already thy own, for you deserve nothing, not even the care and protection of a master." So saying he gave the single talent to the two servants who had been faithful; and ordered the slothful and jealous one out of his presence and into utter darkness, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus now described to His disciples and those gathered about Him the day of judgment, when God will demand of His servants an account of how they have used the opportunities which are given to each. "On that day the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another,



"BEHOLD, MASTER, I HAVE DOUBLED WHAT THOU GAVEST ME."

as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left. . . . Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

DESIGNS AGAINST THE LORD'S LIFE.

The teachings, no less than the miracles of Christ, so largely increased His popularity among the common class of people, that He was openly proclaimed the true Messiah, and publicly worshipped as such. But as He grew in popularity among the general public, so did the enmity with which He was received by the scribes and Pharisees correspondingly increase, and they left nothing undone to arouse prejudices against Him, and to bring charges that would put Him on a defense for his life. They were in fear of the populace, however, and had, therefore, to cover their wicked designs, so that they held secret meetings, at which plans for His apprehension were debated. The Feast of the Passover was not yet concluded, and knowing that in the evening Jesus retired to Bethany, the scribes met at the house of Caiaphas, the high-priest,

to discuss the advisability of seizing Him, either on the way, or while He was reposing at His friend's house in Bethany.

While they were considering this plan, Judas Iscariot, the disciple whom Jesus had already declared would betray Him, came to them and offered, for a reward of thirty pieces of silver—which was the sum fixed by the law, for the life of a slave—to betray Him into their hands.

On the evening before this compact was made, Jesus was in Bethany at



THE POOR WOMAN WIPING JESUS' FEET.

the house of Simon, where also were being entertained several of His disciples. Simon neglected the hospitalities of washing his guests' feet, but a poor woman, possibly a member of the household, observing the omission of this customary mark of respect, brought an alabaster box filled with the most costly ointment, and while the company sat at supper, she poured some of the precious unguent upon His head; whereat Judas objected to such an extravagant waste of an ointment that was so expensive, urging, with the hypocrisy which Christ well understood, that "this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." To this Jesus replied, "Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work on Me. For ye have the poor always with you; but Me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Thus did He forecast the speedy termination of His mission, and give a rebuke to him who was to be His betrayer. But Judas was angered, and the vengeful and jealous disposition of the man,

no less than his conscienceless cupidity, tempted him to become the betrayer at the first opportunity, and with this double purpose in view he therefore sought out the enemies of Jesus and proffered his traitorous enterprise.

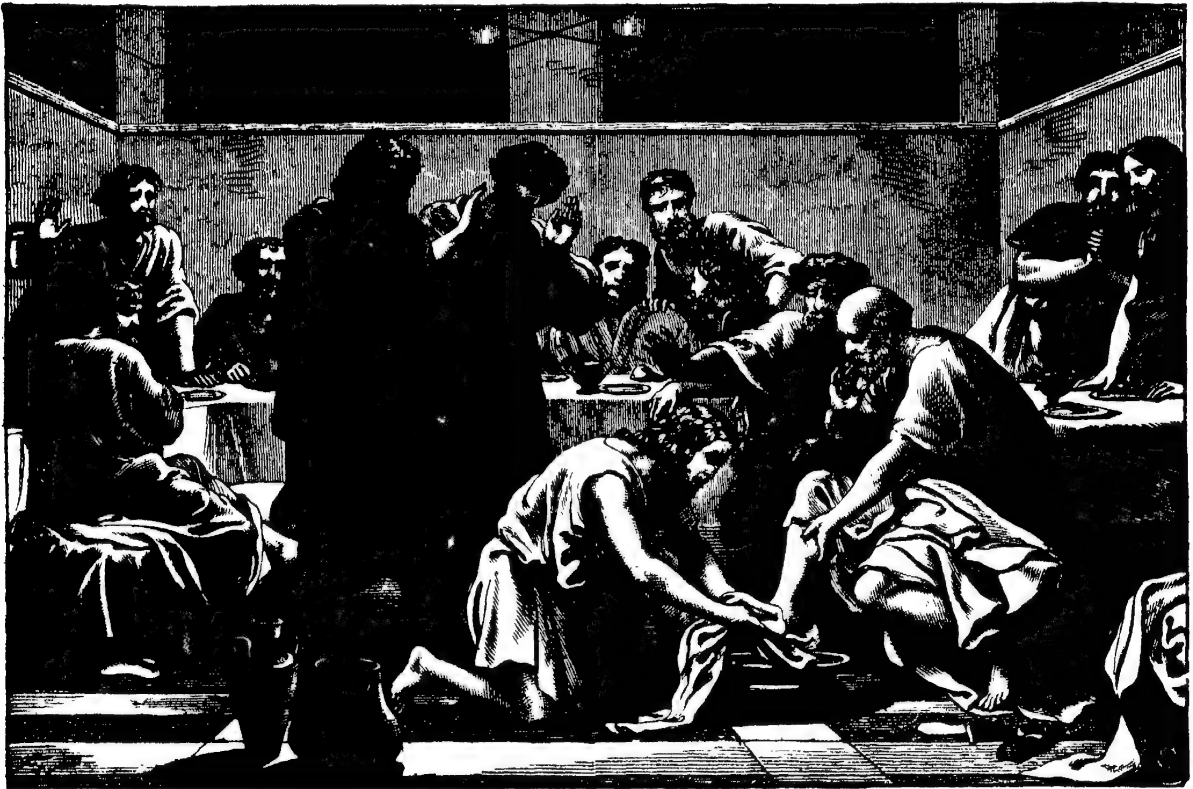
THE LAST SUPPER.

The day now came for celebrating the Feast of the Passover, which was the concluding service of the celebration which had occupied several days. This latter celebration was performed by each man of the observants taking a lamb to the Temple, where it was killed by priests, as a sacrifice, before the altar. The fat was burned upon the altar, but the body of the lamb was carried home and after roasting was eaten by the family at night. Jesus and His disciples had arranged to keep the feast together, and when the time arrived some of the apostles asked of Him where they would meet to observe the feast. To this He answered, "Go into Jerusalem to a certain man, and say unto him, 'The master saith, My time is at hand, I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples.'" The disciples did as they were bidden and made ready the lamb, and when supper was thus prepared they sat down to eat, with Jesus occupying the seat of honor. After first asking a blessing for the food that had been set before them, He broke from a loaf twelve pieces of bread, one of which He gave to each disciple saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." And he poured out as many cups of wine, and as He passed the drink to His company He said, "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood, which is shed for the sins of the world." They wondered at the meaning of this ceremony, for they did not understand that this was given as a symbol of His sacrifice, which was now near at hand. And He told them that this was the last Passover He would celebrate with them until He should Himself become a sin-offering for all people. But still the disciples did not comprehend His sorrowful words, though they each believed He was now ready to set up an earthly kingdom, and the time was therefore at hand for Him to declare His rulership. Thus believing, they fell to disputing as to who should be most favored with appointments in this new kingdom. Seeing their selfish ambition and perceiving that none of the disciples understood His words, Jesus said, "Among those of this world the rulers are greatest, but it is not so in that kingdom which I come to declare, since he who would be chief must begin by being most humble, as if he were the servant of all."

Having thus spoken, Jesus arose from the seat of honor, and, casting aside His garments, took up a towel, which He bound about His waist. Thus attired in the costume of a servant, He poured some water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them like a true serving-man. Some of the disciples offered no objection, but when Jesus came to Simon Peter that apostle said: "Lord, wilt Thou wash my feet? who am unworthy to do Thee the honor of such a service!" To which Jesus replied: "What I do

thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." But Peter would not yet consent to being made the object of his Lord's humility, and declared that he would not suffer it to be so. At which, Jesus partly rose up, and fixing His great eyes of melting love and pity upon Peter, spoke with that sorrowing speech which echoes yet in every human heart, "If I wash thee not, then thou hast no love for Me, nor sign of My brotherhood." Then Peter submitted to be thus honored, and as an evidence of his devotion, he begged that his hands and head might also receive the sign of Jesus' love.

When He had thus washed the feet of all His disciples, Jesus resumed



"LORD, WILT THOU WASH MY FEET?"

the clothes, which he had laid aside, and seating Himself, again addressed them. He told them that the washing was a sign of purification, yet there was one among them whom he declared had not been cleansed of his sins. Said He: "Ye call Me Master and Lord, which is proper, but if the Lord shall humble Himself to wash your feet, why should ye not also wash the feet of one another? For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." Continuing again, Jesus said: "Though I have given you the sign of purification, yet there is one among you that is not cleansed, for he it is who shall betray Me." At this accusation the disciples were much surprised, and each in turn, anxious to prove his fidelity, inquired eagerly:

"Lord, is it I?" When Judas likewise asked if it were he that should prove the traitor, Jesus replied softly, that the others might not hear His answer: "Thou hast said it." Peter was much grieved by this prediction and besought John, who was leaning on Jesus' breast at the time, to ask his precious Mas-



"RISE UP AND LET US BE GOING; BEHOLD, HE WHO WILL BETRAY ME IS COMING."

ter who it was that would do so infamous a thing. To this inquiry Jesus replied: "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have sopped it in a dish." Soon after the sop was given to Judas, and after eating the bread, he went out directly to the scribes and chief priests to accomplish the betrayal according to the contract which he had made with them.

When Judas had gone from the presence of the disciples, Jesus talked with them for a while on the sad events which were now so near at hand, and He said: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples."

Not understanding what Jesus meant by His declaration, that in a little while he would leave them, Peter asked: "Whither goest Thou?" And Jesus answered again, "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterward." With the spirit of devotion to his Lord, Peter passionately asked: "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." To rebuke this display of attachment, which He knew was but the zeal of the hour, Jesus said: "Wilt thou indeed lay down thy life for My sake? Thy passion is scarcely stronger than the mist of the morning, for before the sun riseth again thou shalt have denied Me three times." But Peter protested that Jesus knew not the endurance of his love, declaring that though death should be the penalty of his devotion, yet would not he deny his Lord.

Having instructed His disciples, Jesus and they sang a song of praise together, the benediction was then offered, and the holy party left the scene of the last Paschal feast and retired to the Mount of Olives.

THE PASSION IN THE GARDEN.

The Lord and His disciples went down from the place where they had celebrated the Passover, across the brook Kedron, and entered the Garden of Gethsemane (signifying the *oil press*), where, in the darkness of the deep foliage, they stopped and conversed a short while. Jesus now took James, John and Peter, the three who had seen him transfigured, apart from the others, and retired to another part of the garden. These three He set to watch for the coming of Judas and the soldiers, while He went a stone's-throw away and there, in the solitude, He poured out His great soul in prayer. Overwhelmed with terror at the burden which had been laid upon Him to bear, He gave voice to the agony of His human nature. Falling upon His face, as a sign of His humility, He cried in sorrowing accents, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." In this cry for God's compassion we see the perfect blending of humanity with His divinity, in which we behold Him humble and obedient even unto death, as the representative of sinful man. So, in the triumph of resignation to whatever fate the Father might will He should meet, for the remission of sin, we behold the proofs of His divine nature. Even the foreknowledge of His death by crucifixion, at once the most painful and ignominious of executions, did not appal Him, when the divine nature was appealed to,

though he shrank from the ordeal which His human attributes must pass through.

When he had prayed long, and felt the strengthening grace of God, Jesus rose up and went to His three beloved disciples, whom he found wrapped in sleep. Awakening them he said, "Why sleep ye? Arise and pray, lest ye be tempted to do wrong." So saying, he retired again and resumed His supplication; but when He had returned a second, and even a third time, He found



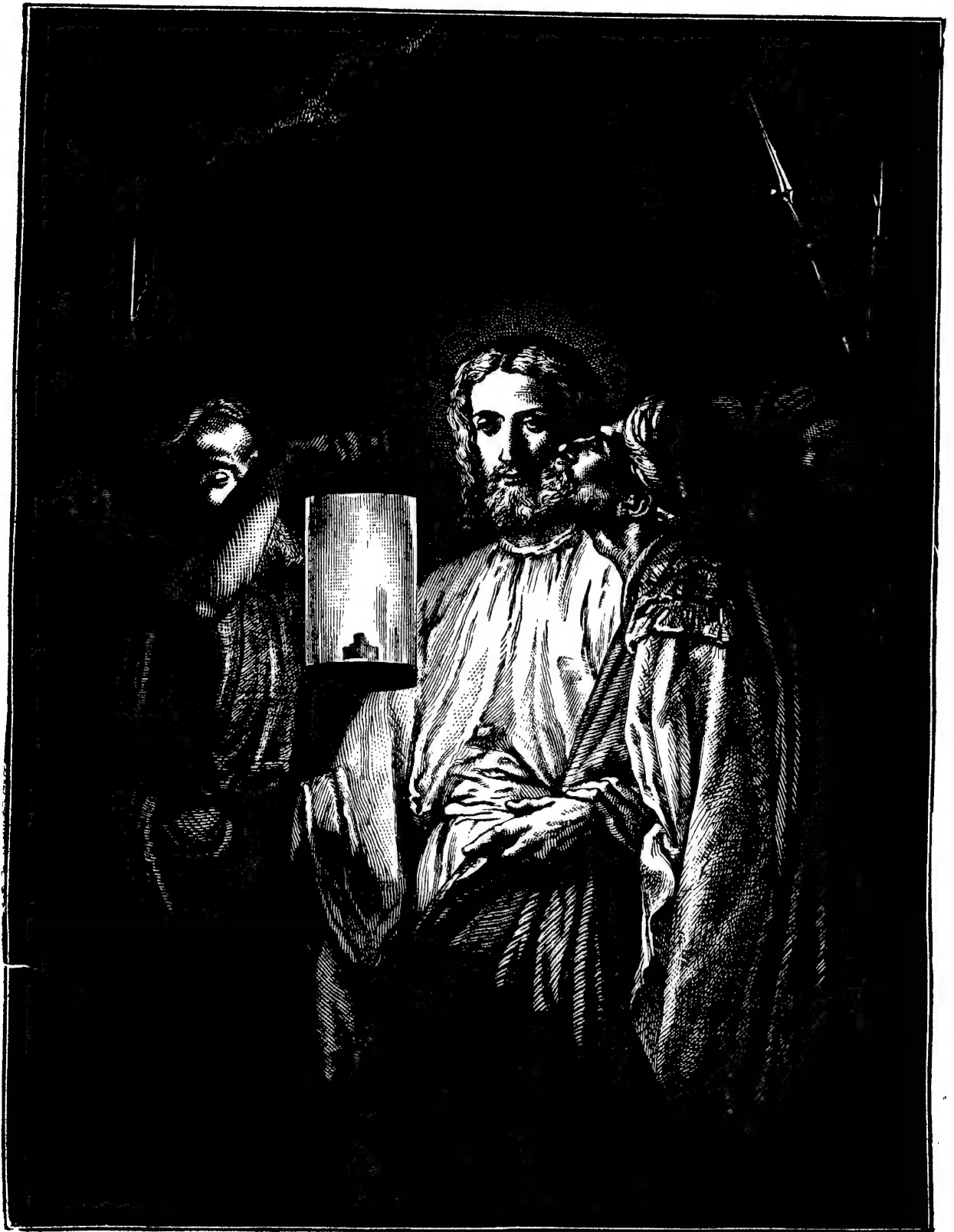
GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE AND THE PASSION TREE.

the three disciples whom He set to watch sleeping, being weary with care and the night far spent.

When Jesus aroused Peter, James and John for the third time, He said, "Rise up, and let us be going; behold, he who will betray Me is coming near."

JESUS TAKEN CAPTIVE.

At the same moment, torches were seen among the trees, and a multitude appeared, consisting of officers of the Temple, and others, hastily armed with swords and staves, sent by the chief priests under the guidance of the traitor Judas; for he well knew the garden, where he had spent many an hour with Jesus. The Lord gave Himself into their hands in such a manner as to prove how entirely the surrender was His own act. Twice they recoiled



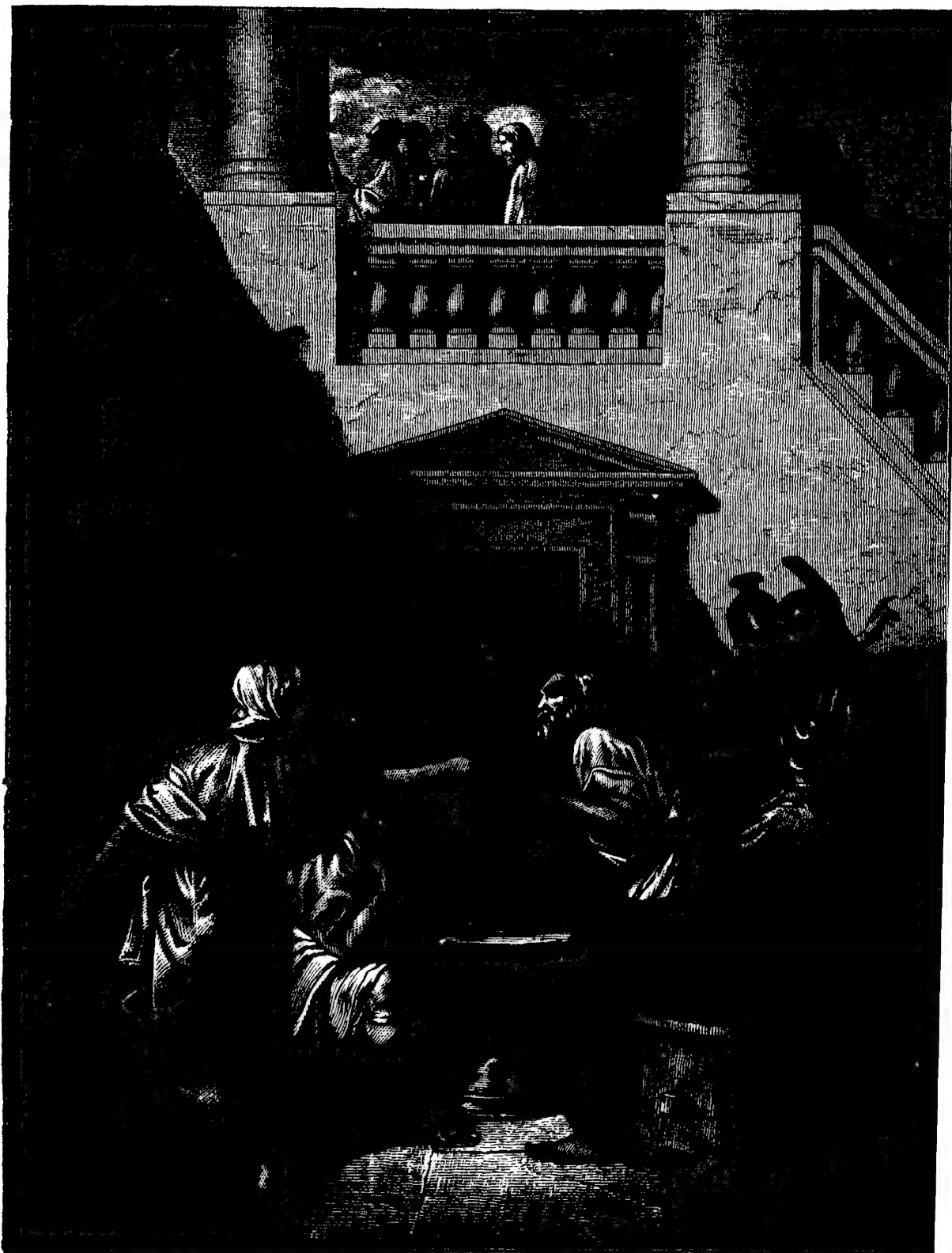
from His presence and fell to the ground before Judas took courage to give the signal to seize Him, by the traitor's kiss. At the sight of the officers binding his Master, Peter drew his sword, one of the only two, that the disciples had, and struck off the right ear of one of the high-priest's servants. Christ rebuked his untimely zeal, in obtruding such puny help upon Him who could have commanded the heavenly hosts, and provoking violence from the captors, at the same time healing the servant's ear. Then, turning to the officers, He remonstrated against their show of force as if He was a thief, when they might have taken Him any day as He was teaching in the Temple. To both parties He explained that this hour of triumph was granted to them and to the powers of darkness, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

The disciples were afraid to share or even watch His fate, as He had foretold. "They all forsook Him and fled." The concern of Peter to make good his boast, and the love of John, induced them alone of all the rest to follow at a safe distance.

The Divine prisoner was led first to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of the high-priest, Caiaphas; perhaps to avoid committing the rulers publicly, till it was decided whether they would risk a public trial. But there seems now to have been no wish to draw back; and Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas, who had already openly advised His death.

Peter and John continued to follow the procession until they came to the high-priest's house, into which John ventured to enter and to also request of a female servant at the door, admittance for Peter also, which was granted. Directly upon the latter's entrance the servant discovered that he was one of Jesus' disciples, and being charged with the same, Peter rudely denied it. Alarmed and conscience-stricken, he retired to the porch, just in time to hear the first warning note—the cock's crow. Soon after, another maid pointed him out to the by-standers, saying: "He also was with Jesus of Nazareth;" and Peter's fears only led him to a more resolute denial. About an hour later, the evidence against him was completed by a kinsman of Malchus, the servant whose ear he had cut off. This man declared that he had seen him in the garden. Peter's continued denials only furnished fresh proofs to the by-standers by means of his Galilean dialect; and thus convicted, he added oaths and curses to the protestation, "I know not the man." At that moment the cock crew again; Jesus turned and looked on Peter from the room where He was waiting in bonds; "and Peter went out and wept bitterly."

• With all the zeal, earnestness and affected devotion which Peter had manifested, when the hour of real trial came he was like a majority of men, more regardful for his own safety than for the One he professed to love above his own life. But in this denial he received a wholesome lesson that prepared him for harder sacrifices, and which led him thirty years later to follow Jesus in the path of martyrdom with a stoicism and fidelity that may well absolve him from the odium cast on the weakness of his denial of Christ.



PETER DENYING THE LORD.

CHAPTER XXXII.

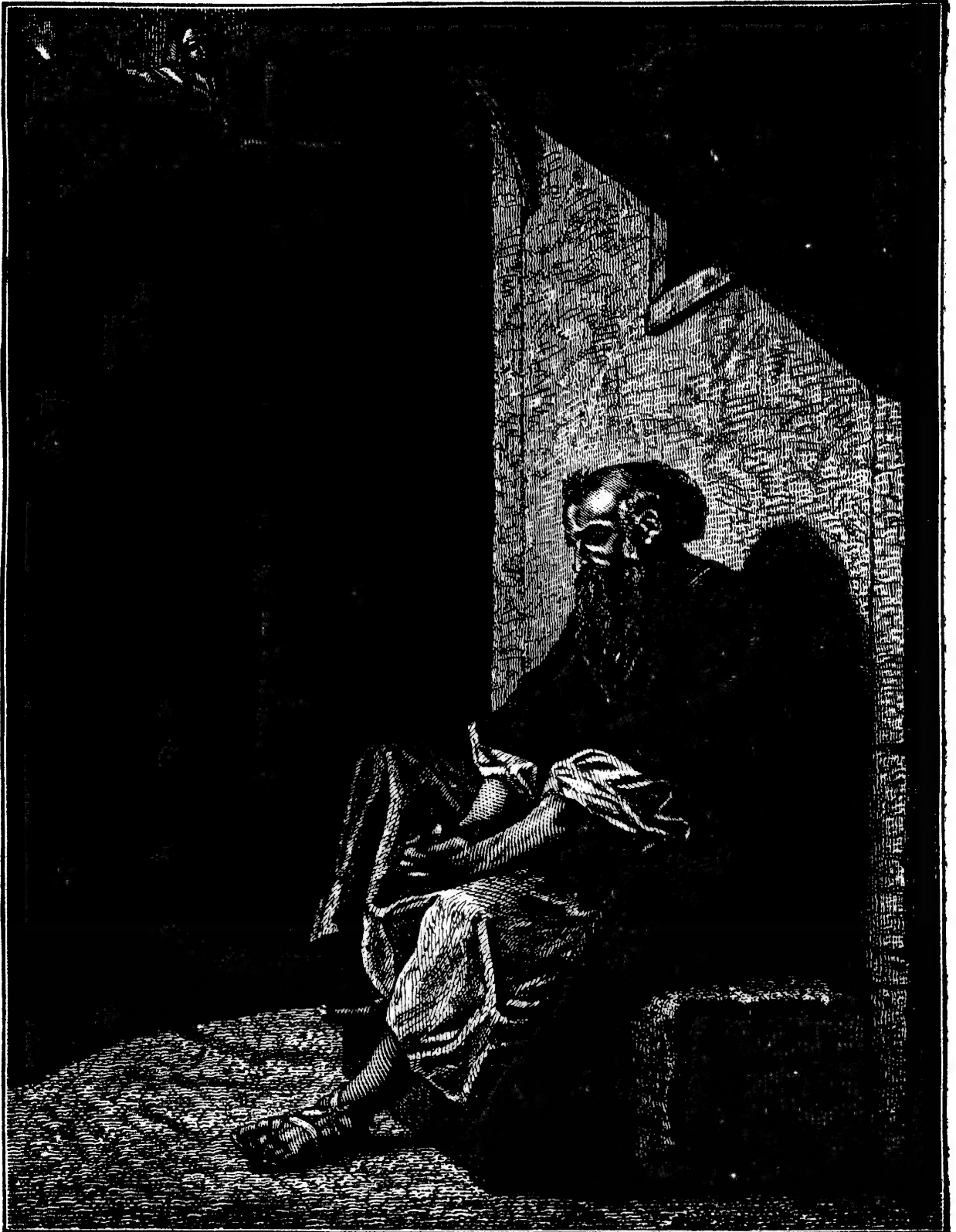
THE TRIAL OF JESUS.



HAVING brought Jesus to the priest's palace, the chief priests, elders and all of the council cast about for witnesses to convict Him. After many vain endeavors to hire false testimony, they found two men who were willing to testify, and being brought into the presence of Jesus, gave this evidence: "This fellow (Jesus) said: 'I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days.'" At this Caiaphas arose and asked Jesus what answer He had to make to this accusation of blasphemy, but Jesus refused to make any reply, as He had no reason to do, since He knew the will of those leagued against Him for His life, and also because the testimony thus given was not in the nature of an accusation for blasphemy.

Not being able to elicit an answer to his first inquiry, Caiaphas questioned Him again, saying: "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." To this Jesus responded: "Thou hast said so: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Not understanding the meaning of His words, and having already prejudged Him, the high-priest rent his clothes, as a sign of distress, and appealed to the council to condemn him as a blasphemer, found guilty by His own declaration before them. Said He, "What further need have we of witnesses? behold now you have heard His blasphemy. What judgment will you give?" And they with one voice answered, "He is guilty; let Him be punished with death." This verdict having been rendered, the officers in the court spat in His face, struck Him many vicious blows, and mocked Him by asking who it was that had offered Him these indignities.

Jesus having been condemned, the next step, according to the Mosaic law would have been to take Him outside the city and there publicly stone Him to death, but the Jews, being under Roman power, had no authority to execute the sentence of death upon any one, without first having the sentence confirmed by the Roman procurator. Jesus was therefore led before this officer, Pontius Pilate, at the seat of justice called the *prætorium*. It was early in the morning when Jesus was brought to this officer, who came out to ask them what charge had been brought against the prisoner. They replied that he was a malefactor,



"AND PETER WENT OUT AND WEPT BITTERLY."

but refused to deal with Him as such upon their own responsibility, which forced Pilate to question Jesus so as to make up the charge himself and bring Him under the Roman law. Thereat Pilate asked Jesus, "Art Thou King of the Jews?" To which reply was made, "My kingdom is not of this world, but of that which bears witness to the truth." To the inquiries addressed Him Jesus made such satisfactory replies that Pilate was compelled to declare to the Jews that he could find no fault in Him. At this the scribes and elders became very vociferous in charging Jesus with having stirred up the people from Galilee to Jerusalem, with the intention of setting Himself up as a king.

On this new charge of sedition Pilate sent Jesus to Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee, but who was at the time in Jerusalem, having come up to participate in celebrating the Passover. Herod rejoiced at obtaining the interview which he had long sought in vain, and put many questions to Jesus, in the hope of His working some miracle. Provoked, however, at receiving no answer, and seeing the vehemence of Christ's accusers, Herod with his soldiers made a mockery of His regal claims, and sent Him back to Pilate arrayed in the imperial purple. The occasion was seized for a reconciliation between the king and the procurator, who had long been at variance, and the words of David were fulfilled, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord and against His anointed."

Finding himself compelled to decide the case, Pilate tried an appeal to the generous feelings of the people. It was a customary act of grace, in honor of the Passover, for the Roman governor to release some prisoner whom the people chose. Knowing that the charge against Jesus sprang from the envy of the priests, and that the people had shown such enthusiasm for Christ, he proposed to release Him whom they had so lately hailed as their king. But the plan was defeated by a cunning manœuvre of the priests. There was another prisoner, named Barabbas, a murderer and robber, and the leader of one of those insurrections against the Roman government which were frequent during the later days of Judah. The feelings of the people were easily inflamed in behalf of this patriot brigand, while they probably saw by this time that Jesus was not about to fulfil their hopes of a miraculous restoration of David's kingdom. Pilate awaited their decision with an anxiety the more intense because while sitting on the tribunal he received a warning message from his wife, who had just awakened from a harassing dream about the "Just Man." He repeated the question, "Which of the two shall I release to you?" And they replied, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Again he tried to bring them to reason, and to revive their interest in Christ, by asking, "What will ye then that I shall do to Him *whom ye call the King of the Jews?*" The answer was ready, "*Crucify Him.*" Still Pilate made a third appeal—"Why, what evil hath He done?" And, again declaring that he found no fault in Him, he proposed the strange compromise, to scourge Him and let Him go! But the loud

cries of "Crucify Him!" prevailed over reason and conscience; and Pilate released Barabbas, and yielded up Jesus to their will.

But first a ceremony was enacted between the governor and the Jews, vain on his part, but of awful significance on theirs! Pilate washed his hands before the people, protesting, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it;" and they accepted the tremendous responsibility: "His blood be on us and on our children." Jesus was now handed over to the Roman soldiers, whose brutality was inflamed with contempt for the present king of the despised Jews. To the torture of the scourging, which preceded crucifixion, was added the mockery of the crown of thorns, the purple robe, and the reed for a sceptre, while the soldiers mingled their parody of the forms of homage with blows and spitting in his face.

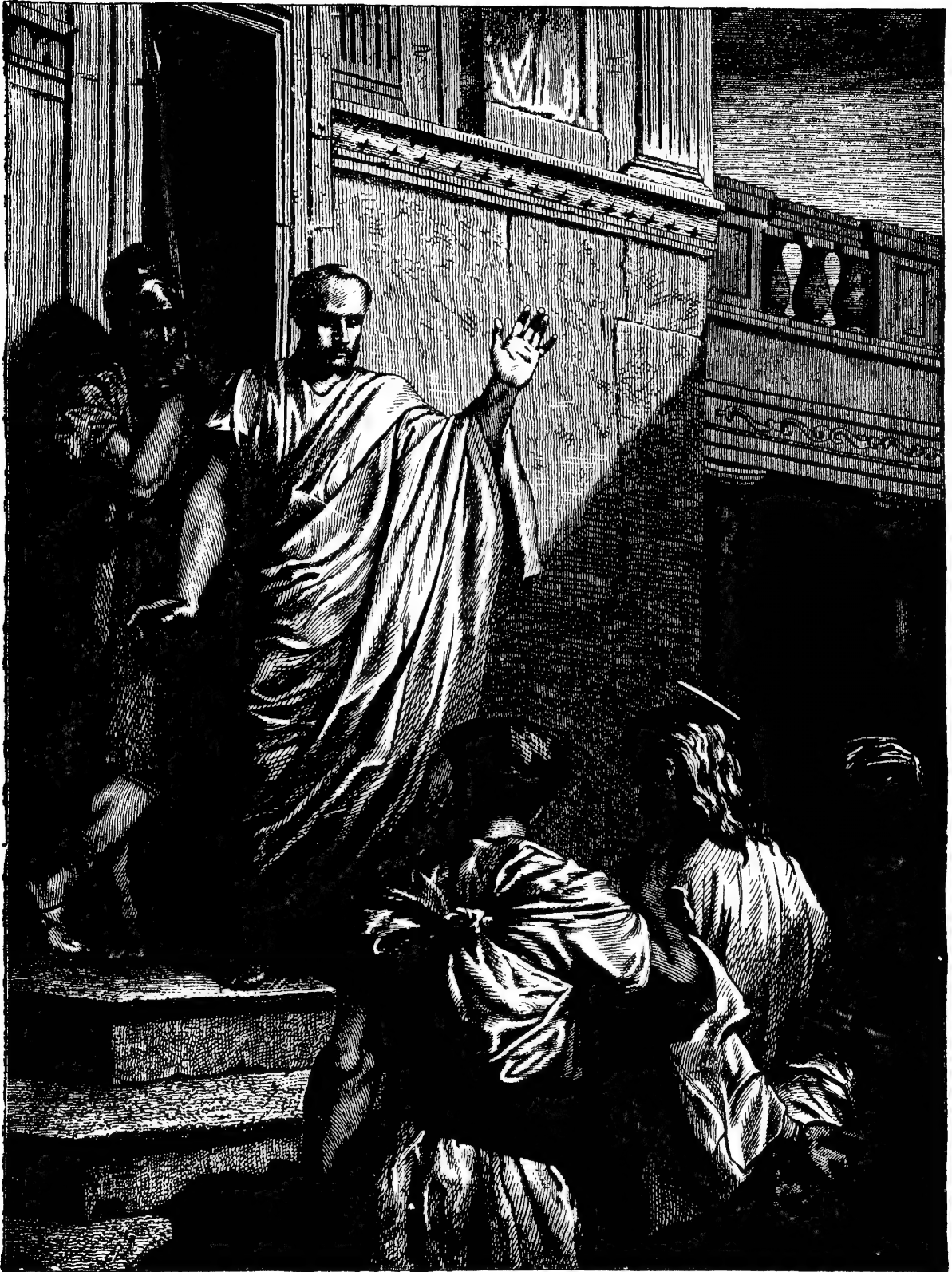


PILATE WASHES HIS HANDS

The scene seems to have suggested to Pilate one more effort to save Jesus, in which, if unsuccessful, he would at least indulge his levity by an insult to the Jews. As a proof that he believed Him innocent, he brought Him out and showed Him invested with the insignia of royalty! But the insult excited rage and not compassion, and the cry was again, "Crucify Him!" "Take ye Him, and crucify Him; for I find no fault in Him," rejoined Pilate, knowing that they dared not take him at his word; while they cried that He deserved death according to their law, because He made Himself the Son of God.

Pilate's reluctance had for some time shown a mixture of superstitious fear, which these words raised to the highest pitch. Leading Jesus back into the hall he asked Him, "Whence art Thou?" but he received no answer. When he urged the question by speaking of his power to crucify or to release Him, Jesus told him that he could have no power at all over Him unless it were given him from above, and with Divine authority He therefore declared the guilt of His betrayers the greater. With all this clamor for Jesus' life Pilate was resolved to release Him, and would have done so had not the cry gone up: "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." The dread of being thus denounced to Tiberius, for acquitting one charged with sedition and an intention of usurping the throne, was more than the selfish ambition of Pilate could endure; so, bringing the judgment seat from the prætorium to a public place on the pavement, he mounted it and gave sentence against the Precious One whom he had before declared innocent. But with the judgment he mingled an insult to the Jews by saying, "Behold your king!"

When the sentence of Pilate had been pronounced the Jews cried out:



"I FIND NO FAULT IN THIS MAN."

"Away with Him! Crucify Him!" "What!" said Pilate, "shall I crucify your king?" But the mob shouted back, "We have no king but Cæsar!"

Jesus was now stripped to the waist, His hands bound to a pillar, so that he was forced into a stooping posture, and then beaten with heavy cords until great black welts rose on the tender skin, while blood flowed from many cruel cuts. He was next led into a room of the governor's palace and divested of His clothing, in the place of which they put on Him the purple robes of royalty, as a mockery, and plaited a wreath of thorns, which they forced on His head as a crown. Into His hand, for a sceptre, they put a reed, and having thus clothed Him with a mock show of kingly power, they offered Him all manner of indignities. While some cried, "Hail, King of the Jews!" others spat on Him, and the more cruel slapped Him with their hands and struck Him with the reed jerked from His grasp.

Seeing them thus amuse themselves with an innocent victim, Pilate hoped that the Jews would be satisfied to let Jesus go, and therefore appealed to them again, saying, "Behold the Man! I bring Him out to you once more to declare that I find no fault with Him." But to this plea for compassion and justice the chief priests only demanded more loudly than before that He be crucified, in compliance with which Pilate gave Jesus over to them.

THE REMORSE AND SUICIDE OF JUDAS.

When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, and that the chief priests were leading Him away to be crucified, the bitterest remorse seized him. The money which he had received as the price of his treachery became as coals of fire burning his hands, and as the sight of some nameless, dreadful thing to haunt his conscience. No doubt he had believed that the Divine power which Jesus possessed would protect Him in the last hour, and thus while bringing no harm upon an innocent person he would be able still to enjoy the proceeds of his infamous compact. With trembling steps and sickened heart he therefore hurried to the chief priests with whom he had bargained and tendered them back the hateful pieces of silver, at the same time urging the innocence of Jesus. But it was too late. They refused the money and reminded him that the responsibility was not theirs, but all his own. Crazy with self-condemnation, he dashed the coin upon the pavement of the Temple and fled from the presence of mankind to a high bluff near Jerusalem, where, hastily adjusting a rope about his miserable neck, he attached the end to a tree and leaped off into space. The traitor there hanged for a time, until his body fell upon the rocks below and was dashed to pieces. More awful than this self-inflicted punishment was the sentence pronounced upon him by the Lord, while Peter expunges his name from the list of the apostles "that he might go to his own place."

With a scrupulousness which is a most striking example of religious formalism glossing over moral deformity, the chief priests decided that the



"THEY MOCKED HIM, SAYING, HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS!"

thirty pieces of silver, as the price of blood, must not be put back into the treasury; so they purchased with the money a potter's field outside the city limits, to be used as a burial place for strangers, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy of Zachariah. It is most probable, and appears to be so implied by the text, that the field so purchased was the place where Judas hanged himself, since it received the name Alcedama, which, in the Hebrew, signifies *the field of blood*.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

The crucifixion of Jesus having been decided upon, and the day appointed for the execution arrived, He was clothed with His own raiment and led out by soldiers from the place of confinement and compelled to take up the cross upon which He was to suffer. After carrying it a short distance His strength failed and He fell beneath the burden. At this juncture there appeared a Cyrenian, named Simon, coming into Jerusalem from the country, and him the soldiers ordered to bear the cross to the place where it was to be set up. The procession, which numbered several thousands, contained many women who raised their voices in lamentation, and to these Jesus turned and bade them to cease their weeping for Him, but rather to lament for the woes that were to follow.

That the execution of Jesus might be attended by all the ignominy possible, there were brought out at the same time two thieves also for crucifixion, that He might die as a common malefactor between them. And thus driven by soldiers, beside two notorious reprobates, our Lord approached the spot chosen for His death. This place, so sacred to the hearts of all who love God, is not definitely known, though it must have been near to one of the gates of the city. The spot was called by the Hebrew name, Golgotha (*place of a skull*), and by the four Evangelists, Calvaria, or Calvary; though tradition seems to fix it upon a hill, there is no proper reason for supposing this to be true; on the contrary, considering the lay of the land about Jerusalem, it is most probable that the place of execution was upon a level stretch of ground.

When the crowd reached the place appointed, the condemned were stripped and fastened to as many crosses, which were of the form familiar to us under the name of the Roman cross, though not nearly so high as commonly represented.

The feet of the sufferer were only a foot or two above the ground—a fact of some weight, as showing that Jesus suffered in the midst of his persecutors, and not looking down from above their heads. The body was either nailed or bound by cords to the cross, or in both ways. Our Lord was nailed, both by the hands and feet, as the prophets had foretold; a method more exquisitely painful at first, though tending to shorten the torture. When the cross was already standing, the sufferer was raised up and affixed to it; but otherwise, as in our Saviour's case, He was fastened to it as it lay upon the ground, and the shock when it was dropped into the hole or socket, must have been terrible.



"AND HE, BEARING HIS CROSS, WENT FORTH."

To deaden the sense of these tortures, a soporific was usually administered; but our Lord refused the mixture of wine and myrrh, lest it produce intoxication. He still observed the meek silence which Isaiah had foretold, till all the horrid details were accomplished, and He hung upon the cross between the two malefactors, on His right and on His left; being thus emphatically "numbered with the transgressors." It was then that He uttered the first of the seven sayings, which have ever been revered as His dying words, a prayer for His murderers—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It was customary in executions of this kind to write the name of the culprit upon a scroll and attach it to the cross above the head. In this case Pilate took another opportunity of mortifying the Jews, for to the name of Jesus he added the words, "King of the Jews," in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, for which reason we have four different translations of the words by as many apostles, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The priests sought to induce Pilate to change the title to, "*He said*, I am King of the Jews," but he retorted angrily, "What I have written I have written."

For three hours Jesus hung on the cross exposed to the taunts and insults of the rabble and rulers, while many asked Him to save Himself, or to fulfil His prophecy to restore the temple of His body in three days. Even one of the thieves hanging upon a cross at His side joined in the cry against Him, but the other reproved the revilings of his comrade, and while confessing the justice of his own punishment, bore witness to the innocence of Jesus, and cried out, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." To this prayer Christ returned the gracious answer, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

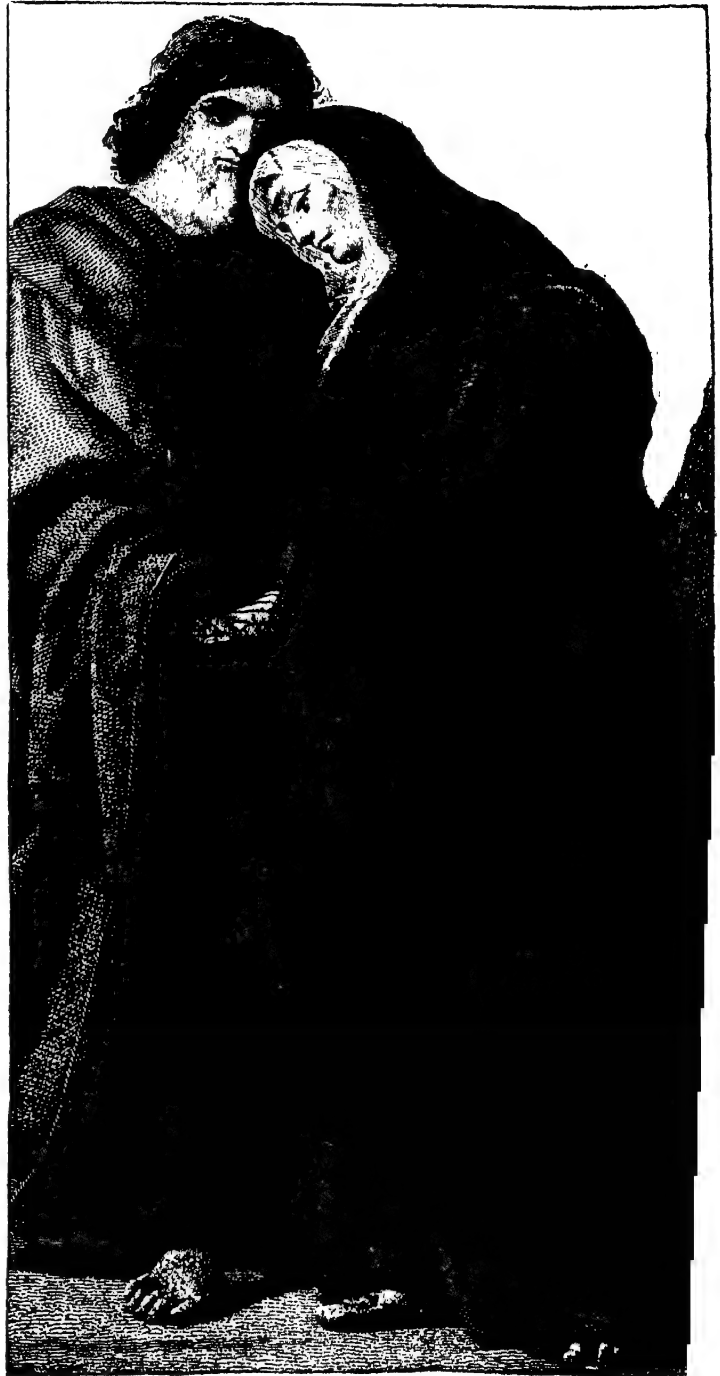
Death on the cross was slow, sometimes not within three days, so while Jesus was hanging and bearing His mortal pains, soldiers remained to watch. They took the garments which had been stripped from Him and divided them among themselves, except His coat, for which they cast lots in fulfilment of the prophecy.

Though toward noon the crowd which surrounded the suffering Saviour had greatly diminished, there still remained the three sorrowing Marys bathing His feet with their tears. To His mother He now spoke words of encouragement, and assured her that she would find another son in John, His beloved disciple, who would henceforth provide a home for her.

It was now noon, but such a noon as had never been seen in Judea. The position of the Paschal full moon precluded the possibility of a solar eclipse; and yet a supernatural darkness rested upon all the land, from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, as if to veil the last agonies of the Redeemer from the eyes of men. But far deeper than that darkness was the gloom that weighed upon the Saviour's soul, as He bore the whole burden of the Divine wrath for the sins of all men. To that awful mystery our only guide is in the words, with at the ninth hour He broke the solemn silence, "My God! My God!

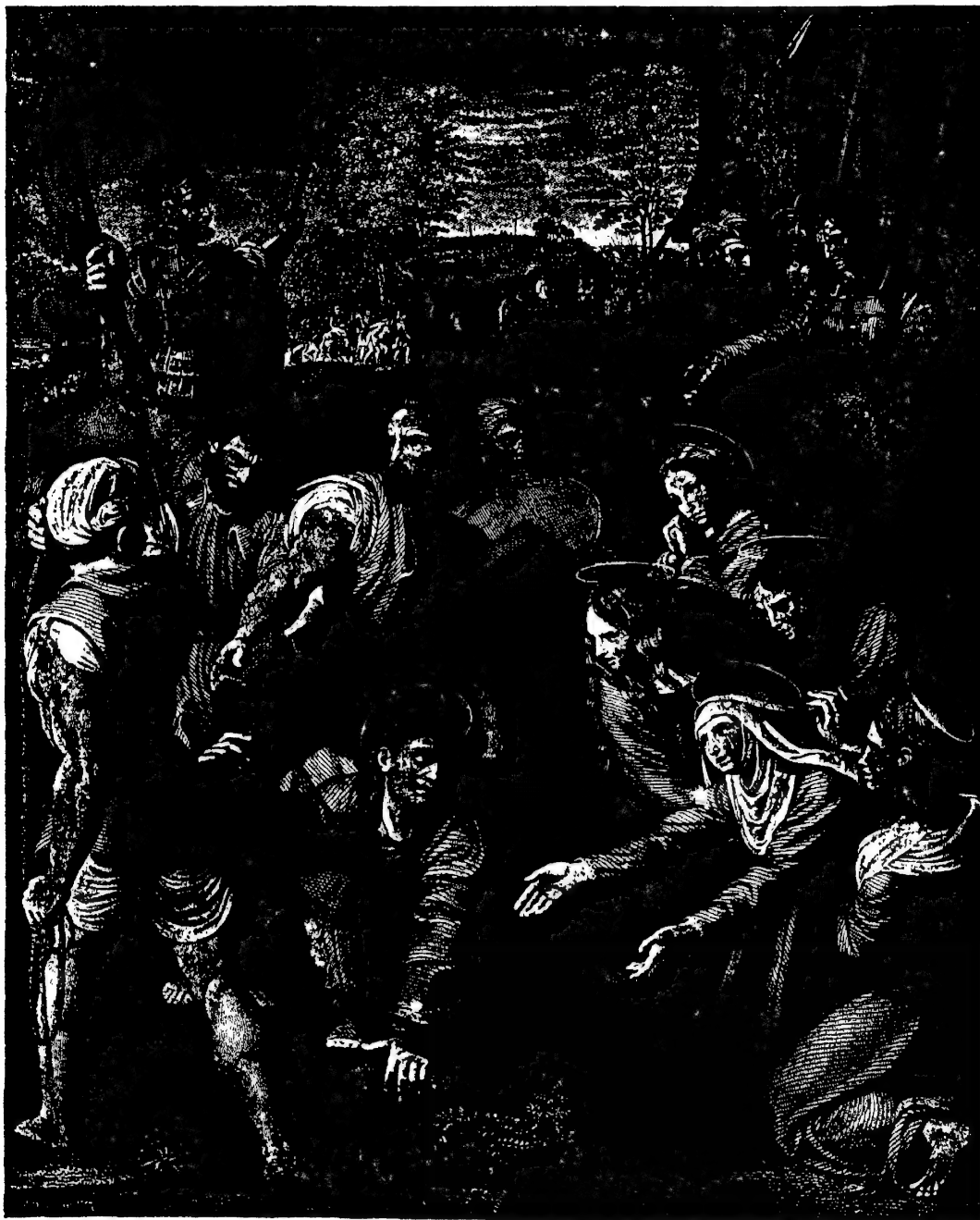
why hast Thou forsaken Me?" words already used prophetically by David in the great Psalm which describes the Messiah's sufferings—words which never since have been, nor ever will be again, wrung from any human being, except through sinful despondency or final impenitent despair; for He endured His Father's desertion that we might never have to bear it. Their sense was lost on the by-standers, who, remembering the connection of the promised Elijah with Christ, caught at the sound "Eli" (*My God*) as a call for the prophet. At this moment the sufferer's mortal frame endured its last agony of intense thirst, and, to fulfil one more prophecy, He exclaimed, "I thirst." One of the by-standers filled a sponge from a vessel standing near, with the mixture of acid wine and water which was the common drink of the Roman soldiers, and lifting it on a stalk of hyssop, put it to His mouth, while the rest said, "Let us see if Elijah will come to help Him." Though offered in derision, it was doubtless refreshing to His sinking frame.

And now all that man could inflict had been endured; all that the Son of God could do and bear for man had been done and suffered. The end of His agony and the completion of His redeeming work are both announced by the loud cry, "IT IS FINISHED;" the soul which had animated His mortal body is yielded back to God with those words of perfect resignation: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit;" and bowing His Head upon His breast He expires.



JOHN AND MARY.

The death of Jesus was followed by the most awful portents, which threw the multitudes in Jerusalem into a condition of abject terror, and led many of



CHRIST FALLING BENEATH THE CROSS.

His enemies to declare that a most holy one had been sacrificed. The priests of the Temple, as they entered the Holy of Holies at the very hour of His dying, saw the veil of the Temple rent in twain, while a mighty earth-

quake shook loose the rocks on the bluffs about Jerusalem, and sent them thundering down the hillside to the city walls; graves were also burst open, and many of those who died believing on Him were permitted to visit the earth again and show themselves walking through the city. The soldiers who were on watch, abashed with fear, said one to another, "Surely this man was the Son of God."

The following day was the Mosaic Sabbath, and chanced also to be the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when the first fruits of harvest were offered in the Temple. For this reason the Jews were unwilling to let the bodies of Jesus and the two thieves hang on the cross, which would have been to them a desecration of the day. Accordingly, they asked Pilate to send soldiers and kill the three sufferers before the next day should begin. Pilate then sent some of his men to complete the execution by breaking the limbs of the victims.



TAKING DOWN THE PRECIOUS BODY.

It was toward the ninth hour, or three o'clock, when the soldiers came to perform their disagreeable office. They found the two thieves still alive and suffering horribly, and dispatched them by the torture of 'breaking their legs,

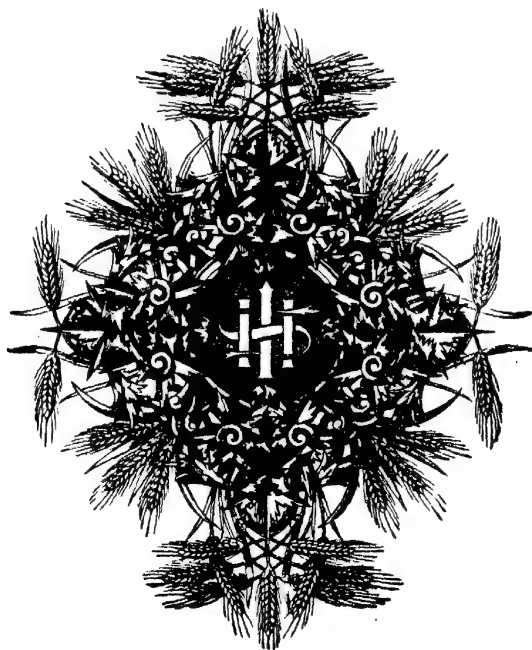
but when they approached Jesus they were astonished to find Him already dead. It was, therefore, considered unnecessary to bruise the limbs, but to make sure of His death one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and from the wound thus made flowed blood and water (serum). In this was a fulfilment of the prophecies, "A bone of Him shall not be broken," and "They shall look upon Him whom they pierced."

In the evening a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrim, who had now come to believe on Jesus, went to Pilate and begged the body for burial. The request being granted, Nico-

the
kings for sepulture.

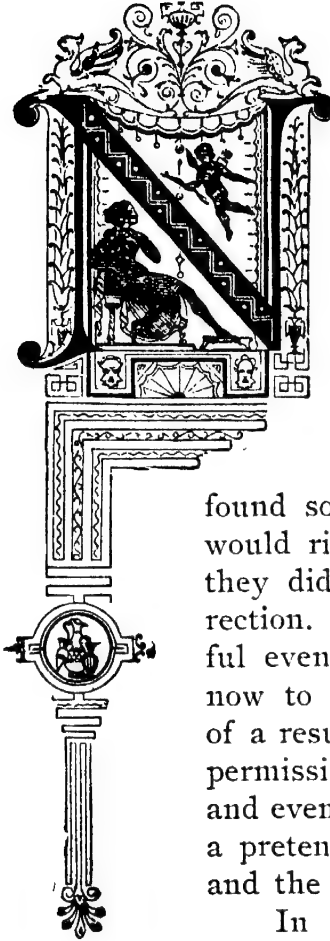
The near approach of the Sabbath left little time for the funeral ceremonies, so Joseph took down the body of Jesus, and wrapping it hastily in fine linens, and bestrewing it with odoriferous spices, they laid it in a sepulchre which had recently had hewn out of a rock in a garden near by; then

Christ's mother, all of whom had engaged in the final burial, departed for their several homes until the Sabbath was ended. The mother of Jesus was so overcome with grief that she was led home by John directly after the Lord's death, and was not with the others at this temporary interment.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.



EVER was the measure of sorrow so full as on the succeeding Sabbath day (Easter eve) of the 16th of Nisan, corresponding with April 7th of our reckoning, which was spent by the disciples and other of Jesus' friends in overwhelming grief; a grief not only prompted by the loss of a beloved brother, teacher and friend, but by the greater oppression which sprung from the knowledge that He who had been crucified had died for all, that in His death and sacrifice the world might be redeemed to life everlasting. In their profound sorrow they were partially sustained by the hope that He would rise on the third day, as foretold; but with all their faith they did not implicitly believe in the fulfilment of a bodily resurrection. The chief priests and Pharisees, impressed by the wonderful events and portents that had accompanied His death, seemed now to have more confidence in the fulfilment of the prophecy of a resurrection than the disciples, and in their alarm they sought permission of Pilate to set a watch of soldiers about the sepulchre and even placed a seal upon the stone that covered the tomb, under a pretense that if not so guarded the body might be stolen away, and the disciples then claim that Jesus had risen from the dead.

In the middle watch of the Sabbath night, suddenly there appeared to the soldiers on guard at the tomb a dazzling light, out of which came an angel that broke the seal of the sepulchre, and then rolling away the stone, sat upon it. So great was the soldiers' alarm at this wonderful apparition that they fell down in a faint, but soon recovering themselves, they ran away from their post of duty to Jerusalem and reported what had befallen them.

The morning of the third day, after the Jewish Sabbath—the Saturday of our reckoning—had scarcely dawned, when the two Marys and certain other women, among whom was one named Joanna (or Salome, as some writers call her), started toward the tomb, taking spices and linens with which to embalm the body, contriving in their minds, as they walked thither, how they should remove the stone. It was before sunrise when they reached the sepulchre, the light of day having just begun to break in the eastern portals, and to throw athwart the high heavens pencils of golden beams. As they came near, their

surprise was very great to discover that the large stone had been rolled aside, by which they believed that some one had come in the night and taken away the precious body of their Lord. But to make sure, they stooped and peered



SEALING THE SEPULCHRE.

into the half-darkened tomb when, behold, they saw an angel sitting at the far end of the grave clothed in a long white garment.—Affrighted at the vision, they would have run away, had not the angel spoken assuring words, saying: "You seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, but is risen. See the place where they laid Him. Go, therefore, and tell His disciples that Jesus is risen from the dead; He will go before you into Galilee, and there you shall see Him."

With mingled fear and joy the women hastened away to carry the glad news to the disciples, but as they went they met Jesus Himself, who addressed them, saying: "Rejoice ye, for it is I." Their happiness was inexpressible,

"HE IS NOT HERE, BUT IS RISEN."



save in the manner in which they greeted Him, for with tears of joy they fell at His feet and worshipped Him, pouring out their souls in thankfulness. After this tender greeting, Jesus bade them, as had the angel, to go seek the disciples to tell them what had happened. Accordingly they carried the joyful tidings to John and Peter, both of whom, however, received the news with incredulity, but they, nevertheless, ran to the sepulchre to satisfy themselves. John was first to reach the tomb, which he found open but hesitated to enter, possessed of some indefinable fear. Peter, more ardent and excitable than his companion, immediately entered the sepulchre, where he found the linen clothes with which the body had been wrapped, and also the napkin that was used to bind about the head of his Lord. John now also entered the tomb, and seeing the things that had been left there, at once believed all that had been told by the Marys, but Peter only wondered, for he had not fully understood the prophecies which Jesus had given of his resurrection on the third day.

The news of Christ having risen, spread rapidly throughout all Jerusalem. The soldiers had made the first report, but this was partially suppressed by the chief priests, who gave them a sum of money to declare publicly that while they were asleep some friends of Jesus had entered the sepulchre and stolen the body. This report was circulated, but while it satisfied many of the Jews, and especially the enemies of Jesus, it did not check the rapidly spreading news that He had indeed risen, and appeared to the women who had gone to the tomb early in the morning.

The mother of Jesus was next to visit the sepulchre, and as she stood weeping at the entrance and looked in, she perceived two angels standing, one at the foot and the other at the head, where the body of Jesus had lain. They asked her why she was weeping, to which she replied: "Because they have taken my Lord away, and I know not where they have laid Him." But as she was turning away in her despair she saw Jesus standing before her. Perhaps half-blinded by tears, or not observing particularly, she did not recognize Him, believing that the person was a keeper of the garden, and therefore addressed Him as such. The one word "*Mary*," which Jesus now uttered, served to fully recall Himself to her, and the recognition being now complete, she rushed forward to embrace Him. He did not suffer her, however, to worship Him as she had desired to do, saying: "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father," but He sent her to foretell to His disciples that He would soon ascend to heaven.

With all this concurrent testimony, all the apostles, save John, still doubted the reports of Jesus having risen, but their disbelief was soon to be fully removed.

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES.

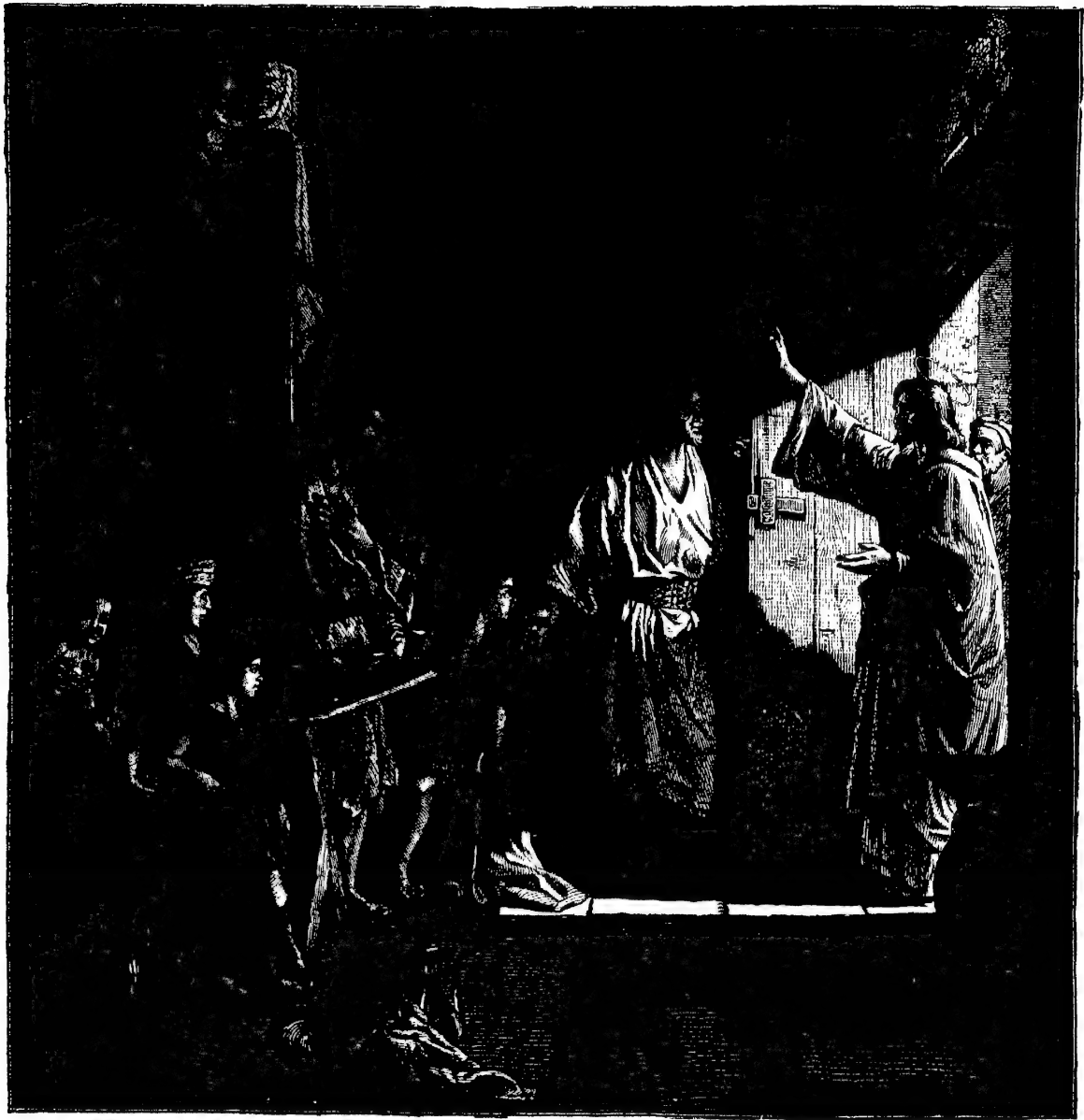
On the evening of the same day that He was risen two of His disciples were journeying to Emmaus, conversing, as they went, of the crucifixion and reported resurrection of Jesus, and condoling with one another in their great

sorrow. While they were thus talking Jesus overtook them, travelling on the same road, and asked what was the subject of their conversation, and why they appeared so sad. To this inquiry Cleopas, one of the two, answered, "Art Thou a stranger in Jerusalem, that Thou hast not heard of the things which have happened there in the past few days?" "What things?" inquired Jesus. "Why," replied they, "the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, and did great miracles before all the people; how the chief priests and rulers have taken and crucified Him." Continuing, they said, "We have hoped that He was the One who would set the children of Israel free from the Romans; and, besides all this, to-day is the third day since He was put to death, and it is told us that He is risen."

Jesus now fell to talking with the two disciples, who failed to recognize Him because, it is said, He was so greatly changed in His appearance. He told them that the things of which they had spoken were only strange because they had not understood what had been written by the prophets; "For," said He, "have not these spoken how Christ should be put to death and rise again on the third day?" Finding that the two disciples were not learned in the history of the Jews, and of the prophecies that had been uttered, He recited to them all the things that were foretold, and how the same had been fulfilled. Thus they conversed until it was very late in the evening, and they had gained their destination, and having found Jesus an interesting companion, they invited Him to spend the night with them. At supper time the three went together to eat, probably at an inn, where Jesus took up a loaf of bread, and after giving thanks, broke and gave to them. By this act, and the blessing which He invoked, they discovered that their mysterious companion was none other than Jesus Himself, but simultaneously with this revelation He suddenly vanished from their sight, leaving them in a condition that was mingled with surprise, wonder, joy and confusion.

Though the two apostles were fairly overcome with astonishment, and knew not ~~what~~ so strange an occurrence signified, their faith in the reports as to Christ's resurrection was increased and to inform themselves they rose up from the supper-table and hastened back to Jerusalem to a house where the other apostles were gathered together. To these they related what had occurred, but their story was received with many expressions of disbelief. While they were speaking of these strange things suddenly Jesus appeared in their midst, who, seeing that they were much frightened, believing Him to be a spirit, addressed them, saying, "Peace be unto you. Why are you troubled? and why do doubts arise in your hearts? behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see Me have." Unable to reply, because of their astonishment, they sat mute, wondering and yet joyful, until He asked them for something to eat, whereat they offered Him a piece of broiled fish and some comb-honey, which He ate before them. Having thus refreshed Himself, Jesus began to teach as

He had before being crucified; reminding them again that as He had been sent by the Father to preach to the world, so now did He Himself send His disciples on a like errand. Having thus instructed them He disappeared, and soon after another disciple, named Thomas, who was not present with the



PEACE BE UNTO YOU."

others when Jesus manifested Himself, now entered the room. He was greeted with joyful cries from his companions, "We have seen the Lord, we have seen the Lord." These assurances, added to the reports which he had already received from those who declared Jesus had risen, yet failed to convince the

doubting Thomas, who said, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the wounds, and thrust my hand into His side, where the spear pierced Him, I will not believe He is risen."

Eight days after His appearance to all the disciples Jesus again manifested Himself at another gathering of the apostles, at which Thomas was present. As He came into their midst Jesus spoke to Thomas, saying, "Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be no longer faithless, but believe that I have risen again." Hearing that voice, as well as seeing His beloved form, was now enough to convince Thomas, who responded, in the fervor of his adoration, "My Lord and my God." Jesus now taught his disciples again in their duties as holy messengers sent by God to teach the way to heaven.

Some time after this, but how long the apostles fail to tell us, Jesus again showed Himself in Galilee at the Sea of Tiberias. There were, at this manifestation, eleven of the disciples together, who were engaged in fishing, and had been casting their nets during the whole night before without success. In the morning, as they returned homeward in their boats, they discovered a man standing on the shore who called to them, saying, "Children, have ye any meat?" But they were compelled to answer "No," since they had been unable to take so much as a single fish in their hard labors over night. Christ bade them cast their nets on the right side of the boat, assuring them that by so doing they would be rewarded by a goodly haul. And they did so and caught such a large number of fish that they were not able to draw the nets. This wonderful result caused John to exclaim, "It is the Lord!" Upon hearing this, and perceiving that it must be so, Peter, who was naked, hastily put on his fisher's coat, and casting himself into the sea swam to the shore to greet Jesus. The other disciples remained in the boat, and slowly dragged the great net filled with fishes to the land, reaching which they found a fire kindled and fish laid thereon cooking, while bread was provided for all to eat. Peter helped to secure the fish, which were one hundred and fifty-three in number, and of such large size that the disciples wondered the net was not broken.

Forty days after His crucifixion, the last meeting of the Lord and His disciples occurred on a mountain in Galilee, an event that He had spoken of prophetically before the crucifixion. As He had begun His public teaching in



HEAD OF JESUS.

Taken from a handkerchief in the possession of the Prince of Wales. Copied by permission for "THE BEAUTIFUL STORY."

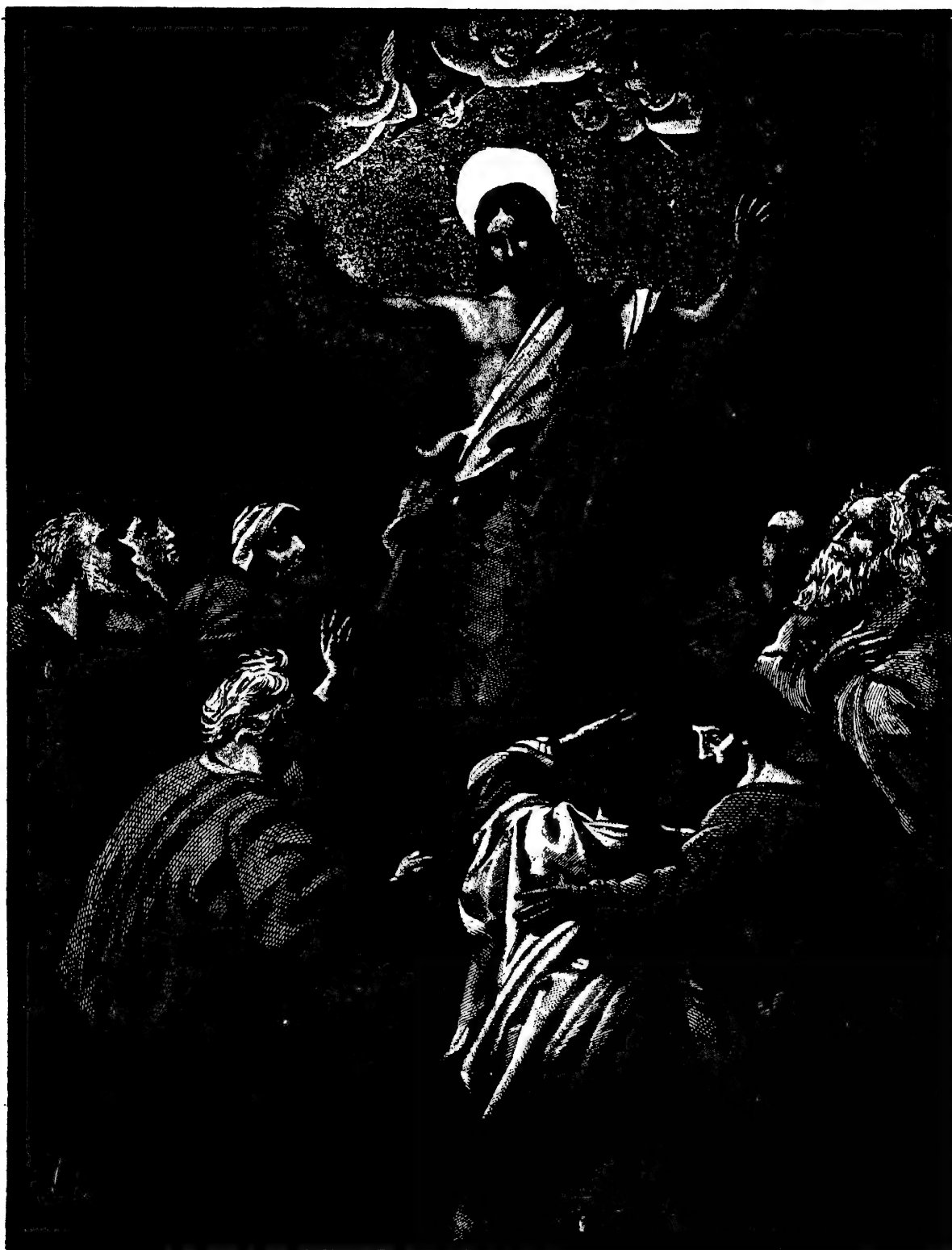
Galilee, so was it appointed that in Galilee He should end it. Therefore all the disciples were called together upon a high hill near Bethsaida, and to them Jesus now delivered His last discourse. He reminded them that God had given Him all power in both heaven and earth, but that His power was for good and not to do evil; this power, in measure, He now delegated to the disciples, and bade them go and preach the gospel to all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and to do all things heretofore commanded. While He addressed His disciples many others came to the place, being, no doubt, attracted by rumors which they had heard of Jesus having risen, and particularly by the spectacle of twelve men assembled upon the mountain. To these, who numbered five hundred, it was given to know that Jesus had indeed returned in the flesh, and they therefore became witnesses to the truth of His resurrection.

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS.

After delivering to His disciples a solemn discourse on their duties as ministers of the gospel, He led them down the mountain and to Bethany, which was on the opposite side of the Mount of Olives from the city of Jerusalem, and there having given them His parting blessing, a bright cloud interposed between them and Him, like the chariot and horses of fire that separated Elijah from Elisha; and upborne by this car of golden cloud, He was carried away to heaven.

Meanwhile the disciples scarcely recollected that this was but what He had Himself foretold: "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" They stood gazing up after Him as if He had been lost forever, till they were awakened from their stupor by the appearance of two angels standing by them, and declaring that this same Jesus, who was taken from them into heaven, should so come in like manner as they had seen Him go into heaven—words which can only refer to the final advent of our Lord, and which teach us that He shall be seen descending from the riven sky as plainly, and as unexpectedly, as He passed into it from their eyes. With this agrees His own warning of "the sign of the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," and the words of the final Scripture prophecy, "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him."

We cannot more fitly conclude this narrative of our Saviour's life on earth, in which we have aimed to bring into one view the records of the four Evangelists with as much brevity as possible, than by calling attention to the two points insisted on by St. John:—First, that we have only a small part of our Lord's sayings and doings in the presence of His disciples, for the world itself could hardly have contained the record of the whole; but, finally, that all we do possess has been written with this sole object, "that we might *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, we might have life through His name."



THE ASCENSION.

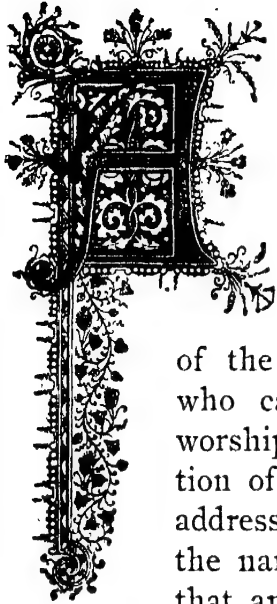
(13-5)

"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

—ST. LUKE xxiv. 51.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.



AFTER the ascension of Jesus the eleven apostles returned to Jerusalem, and, fulfilling His command, awaited there a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This period of waiting they spent in an upper room each evening, praying and giving thanks to God for the gift of His precious Son, and during the day they gathered in the Temple to preach the resurrection and ascension of their Lord. The meetings of the apostles were increased by one hundred and nine disciples who came to join in the praise-giving, so that the number of worshippers was one hundred and twenty, who received the designation of *brethren*. At one of these assemblages, Peter delivered an address, wherein he reminded his brethren that Jesus had stricken the name of Judas from the list of His chosen apostles, and desired that another be elected in his place. Therefore, said he, "Of those who have been faithful unto Jesus since His baptism it is proper that we select one to fill the place of Judas, and who will go with us to preach the gospel as our Lord commanded." This suggestion being received with approval, the disciples selected two men worthy of the appointment, whose names were Joseph, also called Barsabas, and Matthias, and after praying the Lord to direct them in their choice, they cast lots to determine which of the two should be the successor of Judas. The result was favorable to Matthias, who was henceforth counted as one of the twelve apostles beloved of God.

Ten days after the ascension was the Feast of Pentecost, which was the annual celebration of the harvest gathering, and as all faithful Jews observed this day, the disciples met together at one place to offer up their thanks. While thus engaged suddenly they heard a sound like the rushing of a great wind from heaven, which filled the house with lambent flames shaped like forked tongues and rested upon the head of each disciple. This was the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, as had been promised, and immediately each disciple began to speak in a foreign tongue, which was the sign given that they were now prepared to preach to all nations.

Now there was present at this wonderful meeting many Jews and others who had come from far countries where different languages were spoken, so when they heard the disciples preaching in these several tongues they inquired in their astonishment, "Do not all these men live in Galilee? How, then, are they able to speak the languages of those countries from whence we come?"

Some of those from Jerusalem, however, unable to understand what was spoken, made sport of the disciples and declared that they were drunkards, come to profane the services. Peter rebuked them for this unjust accusation, and, addressing himself to Israel, said, "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves all know; Him have ye taken and by wicked hands have crucified. But God hath raised Him up and hath given Him power over death. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

When the audience heard this declaration they became much distressed, and, grieving for what had been done, said to Peter and the other apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The reply came thundering back, loud but compassionate, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children; and to all that are afar off."

Many gladly received this promise and were baptized, and in the evening there were added to the original Church of one hundred and twenty souls, three thousand redeemed Jews, and the number rapidly grew under the powerful preaching of Peter and the wondrous signs which God showed the people.

THE FIRST MIRACLE OF JOHN AND PETER.

On one of the days of this spiritual outpouring among the people John and Peter were going together to the Temple to continue their exhortations, when reaching what is called the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, they saw a poor man who had been lame from his birth, lying there asking for alms. His appeal for help excited the compassion of the two apostles, who told him to look upon them, probably to scrutinize his countenance and discover if he were worthy of their assistance. Having thus satisfied themselves, Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have I give thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk," and taking the beggar by the hand he assisted him to rise, whereat the man immediately received strength, and felt so thoroughly restored that he began leaping and praising God, and followed the worshippers into the Temple. The people who saw this miracle performed were much excited and many at once confessed their sins, accepting it as an evidence of the Divine commission of the apostles, and of the truths they taught. The success of the apostles was therefore so great that the old spirit of jealousy was again excited in the priests and Sadducees, who resorted to extreme measures to prevent the further teaching that Jesus was the Christ,

and through Him was the resurrection of the dead. The apostles were seized by soldiers and cast into prison, where they remained until the following day, when they were brought to trial for preaching what was called a pernicious doctrine.

THE TRIAL OF THE APOSTLES.

On the next day there was a meeting of the council, or Sanhedrim, before which Peter and John were summoned to answer the complaints made against them. To the inquiry first addressed them, concerning the healing of the lame man, "By what power and in whose name have ye done this?" Peter replied, that "it was in the name of Jesus whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole." "This," said he, "is the stone (Jesus) which was set at naught by your builders (chief priests), which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

This fearless answer confused Annas and Caiaphas, the high-priests, which was increased by the healed man being brought before them, and the further proof of the true mission of Peter, knowing him to have been an ignorant man but now given to speak with the eloquence and wisdom of the most learned. With all this evidence, however, they would no doubt have condemned the apostles, save for the fact that there were now five thousand converts to the new teaching who stood ready to defend their faith and the lives of the preachers as well.

The council was adjourned without taking further action, to give opportunity for the members to discuss, among themselves, a plan for repressing the apostles. In debating the matter they admitted the miracle performed by John and Peter, and acknowledged that it was imprudent to attempt to deny it in the face of their own convictions and the thousands of witnesses who had testified to its performance. The only course left them therefore was to attempt intimidation. Accordingly, they called Peter and John again before them, and threatened to visit upon them an extreme punishment if they persisted in preaching to the people. Peter boldly answered, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." The council would gladly have made good their threats but for the ominous attitude of five thousand persons that had been converted by the apostles, so, after renewing their warning, the council wisely let them go.

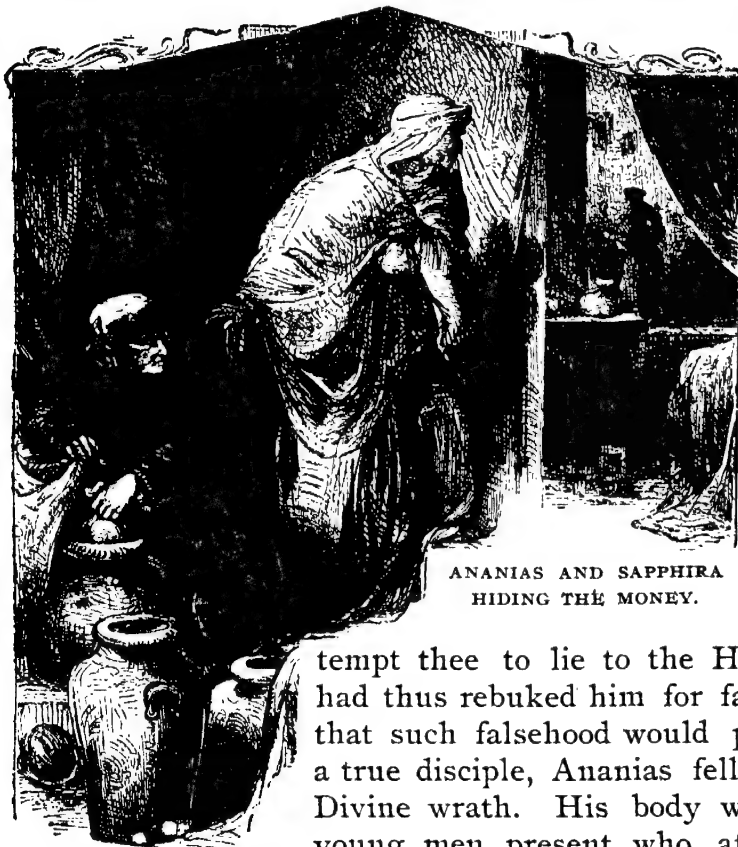
THE DREADFUL PUNISHMENT OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

The apostles, having been liberated, went immediately to their many friends and assembled them together to give thanks for their escape and for the numerous conversions that had blessed their work. While they were thus engaged in prayer the building in which they were gathered suddenly began

to shake, whereat Peter and John knew that Jesus was with them and that He had thus manifested His presence and will to aid them in all things.

After this the disciples preached even more boldly than before, and their labors grew constantly more fruitful. Of their many converts, a great number who owned houses or lands, sold their possessions and brought the money so obtained to the apostles for distribution among the poor. Among those who sought the grace of Jesus through this means was a man named Ananias, and his wife Sapphira, who sold their lands, but by agreement between themselves they brought only a portion of the money to the apostles, aver-

ring, however, that they freely gave all that had been received. Ananias came first to Peter with the portion he had intended to give, and made his avowal that for the whole of his possessions this was all the money he had received. But Peter, having miraculous fore-knowledge of what was done, said to him: "Ananias, was not the land thine own before, it was sold, so that thou didst not have to sell it? And was not the money thine own after it was sold, to keep it if thou didst want it? Why hast thou let Satan



ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA
HIDING THE MONEY.

tempt thee to lie to the Holy Ghost?" And when Peter had thus rebuked him for falsifying to God with the belief that such falsehood would procure for him the position of a true disciple, Ananias fell down dead, punished with the Divine wrath. His body was speedily taken up by some young men present, who, after attiring it in grave-clothes, carried it away for burial. A few hours after this tragic event Sapphira, not knowing what had happened, came to the place where the disciples were. And Peter asked her, saying, "Tell me, was the money thy husband brought us, all that you received for the land?" She answered, "Yes." And Peter said to her, "Why have you agreed together to try and deceive the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the men are at the door who have just buried thy husband, and they shall also carry thee out." Then she too fell down at Peter's feet and died instantly. And the young men who had just buried Ananias returned in time to carry out her body also and lay it beside her husband.

This summary vengeance taken by God inspired great fear among those who had been insincere, and prevented those given to worldly conceits from entering the Church, but its effects were salutary in the end, since it kept out those of impure motives, and increased the faith of others, so that the work of conversion continued. Daily the apostles assembled on the portico of Solomon's Temple, and not only preached to the people but performed many miracles. Multitudes came into Jerusalem to hear Peter, who healed the sick that were brought to him, and many of those afflicted were restored to health by being carried upon their beds close enough to the apostle for his shadow to fall upon them.

PETER AND JOHN AGAIN THROWN INTO PRISON BUT RELEASED BY AN ANGEL.

The jealousy and indignation of the Sadducees at seeing the gospel spreading so rapidly, became so intense that at length they defied popular sentiment, and rudely seizing the two most prominent apostles, John and Peter, first thrust them into prison, where they were speedily joined by their no more fortunate brethren. On the same night, however, an angel opened the doors of the prison and set all the apostles free, and in the morning they were again on the portico preaching and healing as before.



DEATH OF SAPPHIRA.

When the Sanhedrim met on the following day they received a report of the miraculous deliverance, which they themselves confirmed by an examination of the prison bars and the guards. Fearing to do them open violence the council had the apostles brought again before them and put the same question as before, "Why speak ye of Jesus contrary to our commands?" Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men. That Jesus whom you slew on the cross, God has raised up again, as a Saviour, to give the Jews new and penitent hearts, and forgive them their sins. And we, His apostles, are sent to tell you of these things."

When the high-priest and the rulers heard what the apostles said, they were filled with madness against them, and talked with one another about putting them to death. Then stood up one of the rulers, a learned man named Gamaliel, the preceptor of Paul, who was much thought of by all the Jews, and he commanded that the apostles should be sent out of the council for a little while. When they had gone, Gamaliel said, "Ye rulers of Israel,

be careful what ye do to these men. For a good while ago, a man named Theudas rose up, pretending that he was some great person, and about four hundred men followed him and obeyed what he told them. But before long he was slain, and all who had obeyed him separated from one another. Afterward another man, named Judas, of Galilee, persuaded many persons to follow him, but he also perished, and those who had gone with him were scattered. And now, I say to you, Let these men alone and do them no harm; for if what they teach be untrue it will soon come to nothing; but if God has sent them to speak no one may resist his servants."



AN ANGEL, RELEASING THE APOSTLES.

The wisdom of Gamaliel prevailed with the council, to overcome the decision that had already been made to put the apostles to death, but he could not prevent wholly their punishment, for they were severely scourged, as was permitted by the law, and again forbidden to preach in the name of Jesus.

SEVEN DEACONS CHOSEN TO DISTRIBUTE ALMS.

Instead of the stripes which they received repressing their ardor, the apostles gloried in having suffered for Jesus' sake, and seem to have redoubled their exertions, for the service which they now held both in the streets and Temple was continuous. Nor was their labor less rewarded, for so many now

became converted that it became necessary to effect some kind of organization for the Church government. This step became more urgent by reason of complaints which the poor made to Peter that they were not receiving a proper share of the common fund. At a council, therefore, held by the apostles, it was decided to elect seven deacons, chosen from among those held in highest favor by reason of their upright character, whose duties were to distribute the contributions among the worthy and to superintend the "service of tables," which would relieve the apostles and thus allow them to devote their entire time to prayer and the ministry. The seven that were so chosen were Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Nicolas and Parmenas. Stephen, the most zealous of the number, not only attended to the poor but gave much of his time to preaching and performing miracles, the gift of which was given him when he became a deacon.

So energetic, bold and successful did Stephen become as a teacher in public places, that not only the Sadducees, but the Pharisees also, became violently jealous of him. Charges of blasphemy were preferred, upon which he was apprehended and brought to answer before the Sanhedrim. After hearing the false witnesses speak and perceiving the intent of the council, Stephen spoke in his own behalf, not with cringing words or petitions for mercy, but with the same fearlessness that had characterized his preaching. He repeated to his judges the story of Moses, of Abraham, of Jacob and of Joseph, how they had suffered at the hands of wicked men for opinion's sake, but that in the end they had triumphed, while their enemies were made to eat of the bread of sore affliction. Stephen concluded his speech after this manner, "The wickedness of your fathers have ye inherited; as they did, so do ye now. Which of the prophets did they not persecute? And even now yourselves have slain Jesus, the Messiah, that Just One Himself."

HE IS STONED TO DEATH AND BECOMES THE FIRST MARTYR.

When the men in the council heard these words, they were filled with rage against Stephen, and gnashed on him with their teeth like wild beasts. But he, looking up toward heaven, saw a glorious light there, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Then they cried out with loud voices against him, and stopped their ears that they might not hear his words; and they brought him out of the city and stoned him. While they were stoning him, he kneeled down on the ground and prayed, saying, "Lord, forgive them for this sin."

Punishment by stoning was instituted by Moses and was comparatively common among the Jews for several hundred years after Christ. The law required that the witnesses against the offender should cast the first stone, but in the case of Stephen there were several witnesses, who, to allow more freedom for their arms took off their outer garments, or togas, and gave them to

a young man to hold while they should bruise out the life of this holy disciple of Jesus. This young man, who took charge of the divested garments, was Saul, the son of a rich man, an intense hater of the Christians, but of whom he afterward became an equally earnest supporter, as we shall presently see. This man, who was an officer of the Pharisees, most probably, seems to have been stimulated to a greater passion by the sight of blood, and he entered into a persecution of the Christians with such fierce zeal, scourging them in the synagogues, and committing men and women to prison, that the disciples were compelled to flee to other countries for refuge, but wherever they went they continued preaching the gospel.

Philip went into Samaria, where he performed many miracles, and accomplished so many wonderful cures among the sick and lame that great numbers embraced the religion which he taught, and were baptized. Peter and John, hearing of his good success in Samaria, soon followed, and the three labored there with such good results that thousands were added to the Church. It was here that they met an impostor named Simon, who, by methods of his own, not understood at the time, performed many wonderful things which the people regarded as a manifestation of Divine power. This man was also converted by the preaching and miracles of Peter, and became thoroughly repentant for the wickedness he had practised.

CONVERSION OF THE EUNUCH.

After remaining some time thus in Samaria, by command of the Lord, Philip quitted the country and went to Gaza, a city to the west of Jerusalem. While on his way he was overtaken by an Ethiopian eunuch, who was returning from Jerusalem, where he had been to worship at the Temple. This man was an officer under Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, who was in the line of succession from the Queen of Sheba. As he came near, Philip perceived that the eunuch was reading aloud from the Scripture, which made him bold to inquire, "Dost thou understand what thou readest?" To which the eunuch replied, "How can I, except some man shall explain to me?" And he then invited Philip to sit with him in the chariot, which was thankfully accepted. Philip now began teaching him and explaining the way of salvation through Christ, which so affected the eunuch that when they came to a stream of water he begged the apostle to baptize him. Philip acceded to this request, and led the eunuch into the water, where he baptized him in the name of Jesus. Immediately after Philip was caught up by the Holy Spirit and disappeared, but the eunuch continued on his way filled with joy, and giving praise for this manifestation of God's love for him. Philip's next appearance was at a city called Azotus, where he preached for a time with wonderful success, and continued his triumphal career through all the western cities until he came to Cæsarea.

THE WONDERFUL CONVERSION OF SAUL.

News of the success which attended the apostles in all parts of the Holy Land reached Jerusalem every day, and particularly of the numerous conversions then being made at Damascus. This so aroused the ire of Saul that he sought and received of the high-priests at Jerusalem permission, through con-



‘, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?’

currence of the priests at Damascus, to seize any disciples which he might find there and to bring them to Jerusalem for punishment.

Armed with the necessary authority, Saul set out at the head of a guard of soldiers for Damascus, with his heart steeled against mercy. But as he approached near the city suddenly an intense light flashed out from heaven full upon the persecutor, which so dazzled him that he fell to the ground in great fear, and as he lay there he heard a voice crying to him from out the

streaming rays, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And Saul knew that the voice came not from one of this earth, so he answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" How much more frightened must he have been on hearing the reply, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Humble now, and perhaps realizing on the sudden how great had been his iniquity, and how much he deserved punishment, in a trembling voice Saul cried, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" "Arise," was the command, "and go into the city, and it will be told thee what to do." Then Saul arose, but his sight was so blinded and his body so weak from fear, that he could not walk, so that his soldiers had to carry him into Damascus, and for three days he could not see, neither did he eat nor drink.

ANANIAS SENT TO RESTORE SAUL'S SIGHT.

At the time of Saul's visit to Damascus there lived in the city a man named Ananias, who had been converted to Christianity some time before, and was an energetic disciple. To this man the Lord spoke, commanding him to go at once into a street called Straight, and there ask at the house of one Judas, for a person named Saul: "He is now praying to Me, and has seen thee in a vision, coming to him, and putting thy hand on him, that he may receive his sight." Ananias was not only surprised at thus hearing the voice of God, but especially to receive such a command, and he even expostulated, saying, "I have heard many speak of this man, and of the great evil he has done to Thy people in Jerusalem; and he has come here with letters from the chief priests, giving him power to bind in fetters all who believe on Thee." But the Lord said, "Go, as I have told thee, for I have chosen him to preach My gospel to the Gentiles, and to kings, and to the children of Israel. And I will show him what great sufferings he must bear for My sake."

Then Ananias obeyed and went into the house of Judas, and putting his hands on Saul, said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to thee as thou wast coming to Damascus, has sent me to put my hands on thee, that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost." And immediately Saul's eyes were opened and he could see; and he rose up and was baptized.

THE JEWS SEEK TO KILL PAUL.

After being thus converted, and seeing the hand of God in all that had been done for him, Saul, who is henceforth called Paul, began at once preaching in the synagogues with all the fervor and faith that had characterized Peter and John. The people were, of course, amazed at this sudden change, and were at first disposed to believe he had adopted this appearance of conversion in order the better to discover who were professing Christians. The power of his speech, however, won many to join the disciples, while his accusations against those who had denied and crucified Christ so angered the Jews at Damascus that they sought his life. Their threats and passions increased until a watch was set upon him, and they would no doubt have

seized and stoned him had not some of his friends secreted him in a house, and at night let him down in a basket over the wall so that he might escape from the city.

Paul went from Damascus to Jerusalem and sought the disciples who still remained there, but they were afraid to fellowship with him until Barnabas, one of their number, told them of the strange circumstances of Paul's conversion, and how the hostile Jews were conspiring against his life. Paul was soon compelled to flee from Jerusalem, and he went to his native city of Tarsus, in Asia Minor, where he continued to preach for some time.

Peter and John likewise went from town to town, preaching and healing the sick and founding churches, until there were at this time, A. D. 50, nearly one hundred established congregations. One of these Peter founded at Lydda, where he miraculously healed a man named Eneas, who had been bed-ridden from palsy for eight years. This miracle led him to the performance of one greater, and by which the Church was increased along the Mediterranean coast.

THE RESURRECTION OF DORCAS.

Near Lydda was the seaport of Joppa, which is a considerable city at this day. Residing there at the time was a woman named Dorcas, who was widely known for her great charities, and for all those accomplishments which ennoble woman. It chanced that she fell sick, and after a short illness died. Her death was bewailed by all the inhabitants of Joppa, many of whom came to pay honors to the body. It was dressed with much care, and embalmed with sweet spices and camphor, and clothed with rich winding sheets, and laid in an upper chamber preparatory to burial. Some of the disciples of the city, learning that Peter was then preaching in a neighboring town, and performing many miracles, sent two messengers bearing a request for him to come quickly to Joppa. To this Peter promptly responded, and was taken at once to the chamber where the beloved body lay. Here he found many widows and others whom she had helped in their troubles, and these began to offer their eulogies on the numerous godly merits she had possessed. But Peter, with some impatience, bade them leave the room, and then kneeling down he prayed, after which he arose and calling to the dead body said, "Dorcas, arise!" At the sound of his voice the woman sat up and appeared as one who had just awakened from a refreshing sleep. Peter now called to those without the room, and when they entered Dorcas received them, restored to life, and health as well. The fame of this miracle spread rapidly, and caused many to join the Church in Joppa, besides resulting in the greatest good throughout all the cities of western Palestine.

CONVERSION AND BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS—PETER'S VISION.

During the time of Peter's stay in Joppa a singular thing occurred to Cornelius, a Roman centurion who loved God, by which he was brought to

Peter for baptism. This man was noted for his generosity to the poor, on which account he had great favor with the Lord and his people as well. It is related that about the ninth hour of the day Cornelius beheld a vision of an angel approaching him, which he addressed, "What is it, Lord?" The angel replied, "God has heard thy prayers, and seen the alms which thou hast given. Now send men to Joppa for a man named Peter, who is staying at the house of Simon, a tanner, which is by the seaside; when he has come he will tell thee what thou oughtest to do." Thus saying the angel vanished. Cornelius at once called two servants and one of his soldiers, in whom he had the most confidence, and, first relating what had befallen him, he sent them quickly to Joppa, which was only one day's journey distant.

On the following day Peter went up on the house-top to pray, as was his custom. All the house-tops in that country are flat, and are used for promenading in the warm summer evenings, as well also for devotions, on account of the privacy which they afford. On this occasion, while Peter was praying, he suddenly felt a great hunger, and at the same time he beheld a wondrous vision: the sky above appeared to open and a great sheet held at the four corners was let down before him filled with numerous wild beasts, birds and insects. And as he was looking a voice came out of the clouds, saying, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." Now, held within the sheet were many animals which the edict of Moses had pronounced unclean, and seeing this, Peter remonstrated, saying, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." But the voice spoke thrice, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." The meaning of this vision was not revealed at once to Peter, though he soon afterward knew that it was given as a sign that the gospel was not to be withheld from other nations, notwithstanding that the Jews looked upon all other people with a feeling of loathing.

While Peter was striving to interpret the significance of the vision the servants of Cornelius appeared before the gate and inquired for him. At the same moment God spoke to him, saying, "Three men are looking for thee; arise and follow them, for I have sent them." And Peter went down to the men, and said to them, "Behold, I am he whom ye seek; for what reason have you come?" They answered, "Cornelius, the centurion, who is a just man and one that fears God, and is well thought of by all the Jews, was told by a holy angel to send for thee to come to his house, that he might hear the words which thou wouldst speak." Then Peter called the men into Simon's house, and kept them that night; on the morrow he went with them, and some of the disciples who lived at Joppa went also.

The next day they came to Cæsarea. Cornelius was expecting them, and had invited his relations and near friends to be with him when Peter should come. And as Peter entered into his house, Cornelius fell down and worshipped him. But Peter spoke to him, saying, "Stand up; for I am only a man like thyself." Then Peter went in with him and found there many per-

sons gathered together, who, like Cornelius himself, were not Jews, but Gentiles. And Peter said to them, "You know that the Jews say it is wrong for them to make friends with the men of other nations, because the Jews think themselves better, and call others common and unclean. But God has taught me, in a vision, not to call the men of other nations common or unclean. Therefore I came to you as soon as you sent for me, and now I ask for what reason you wanted me to come?"

Cornelius answered, "Four days ago I was fasting and praying in my house, and, behold, an angel stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, God has heard thy prayers, and seen thy kind acts to the poor. Send therefore to Joppa for a man named Peter. He is staying in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the seaside. When he comes, he will tell how thou and all thy family can be saved. Immediately then I sent for thee, and thou hast been kind to come. Now we are all here together to hear what God hath commanded thee to say."

Peter accepted the invitation of Cornelius and preached to him and his friends of their duties to God, and recited the story of Jesus' good works and His cruel death with such effect that the entire house was converted and baptized, and he remained with them several days glorifying God.

PETER IS CAST INTO PRISON, BUT AN ANGEL DELIVERS HIM.

The wonders performed, and particularly the rapid conversion of the people to Christianity by Peter, stirred up the anger of the Hellenists anew after it had slumbered for about five years. Herod, the tetrarch, but who was called king, ruling as the representative of Rome, became specially vindictive and began a vigorous persecution of the Christians. James, one of the apostles, was first seized and publicly beheaded, amid the plaudits of the brutal populace. Peter was shortly afterward arrested, but the Feast of the Passover being at hand his execution was deferred until the celebration should be concluded. He was thrown into prison and, as a measure of particular precaution against his escape, he was chained to his guards by means of iron bands around his wrists and ankles, connected with chains fastened to similar bands about the limbs of his keepers. But these could not avail against the will of God. On the night preceding the day fixed for his death, Peter was awakened by the gentle touch of an angel, as he lay sleeping between the guards, and he heard a voice, "Rise up quickly." He opened his eyes to see a brilliant light filling the naturally dark cell, and beheld before him a radiant angel, who now said, "Dress thyself, and put on thy sandals and follow me." Peter saw also that the men sent to guard him were in a profound sleep—but the chains! This perplexity was only for a moment, for as he sought to rise, the bands which held his limbs broke asunder, the great iron gate which barred the way to liberty swung back noiselessly of its own accord, and following the angel Peter walked out and down through the quiet streets until they came to the vicinity

of a friend's house, named Mary. Here the Divine liberator left him, and Peter went to find shelter where he knew were his friends. Mary was the mother of Mark, and to her house came many Christians every day to worship together. But it was with great secrecy, for the emissaries of Herod were everywhere seeking to glut their vengeful hatred with Christian blood.

Peter knocked at the door of Mary, when Rhoda, a young woman who chanced to be at the house at the time, went to answer the summons. She did not quickly open the door, but suspecting that it might be one of Herod's spies, she crept cautiously and gave a challenge, "Who is it?" Peter responded in such a manner that Rhoda knew immediately that it was he, and so overjoyed was she to know that he was near again, that she forgot to open the door, but in her gladness now ran back to Mary and the company to tell them that Peter was without. They thought she must be mad, and so told her, for was not Peter in prison, and was he not to furnish the bloody spectacle of a victim to Jewish hatred before the populace on the morrow? But Peter kept knocking until they came and admitted him, and heard from his own lips the story of his miraculous deliverance.

When morning dawned the guards awakened to find to their horror that Peter had disappeared, but how they could not divine. The iron bands were intact, and the great gate was bolted through which no one could have passed. Herod soon heard of the disciple's escape and sent immediately for the keepers. These he questioned concerning the manner of Peter's escape, but obtaining no satisfactory replies he ordered that they be forthwith put to death. But Herod himself did not long survive, for the Lord afflicted him with a loathsome disease from which he soon died after great suffering.

PAUL IS CALLED TO ANTIOCH.

When most of the disciples fled from Jerusalem, after the stoning of Stephen, about A. D. 35, some of them went to Antioch, a city of Syria, where they preached to the Gentiles and made a great number of conversions. Learning of their success there Barnabas also went to Antioch after Paul's departure for Tarsus, as it was not safe for either to remain longer in Jerusalem. After remaining in Antioch some months, Barnabas sought Paul and brought him there also, as it was a most fruitful field for Christianizing labor. Here they preached daily for a year, in which time several thousand persons united with the Church, and here also was the name *Christian*, as a follower of Christ, first given. At the end of a year, a prophet named Agabus declared that a famine would prevail throughout the land in the succeeding season, to prepare against which Paul and Barnabas raised such funds as they were able to collect from their friends, and took the money to Jerusalem for distribution among the needy Christians in that city, but they were absent only a short time, having made their return to Antioch as soon as possible on account of the bitter feeling which still existed against them in Jerusalem.

A FALSE PROPHET IS STRUCK BLIND.

After preaching another year in Antioch, Paul went to Salamis, on the island of Cyprus, taking with him Barnabas, a native of the island, and another disciple named Mark, but they were ill received by the Cyprians at Salamis, so, after a short stay and little preaching, they removed to Paphos, a town on the same island. Directly after their arrival at Paphos, the deputy of the city, Sergius Paulus, sent for them to instruct him in the way of salvation. But there was a Jew named Elymas who had great influence with the deputy, and as he was a rabid hater of the Christians he for a time undid all the good work of Paul. This so incensed the apostle that he sought Elymas and accosted him, saying, "O thou, who art full of mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season." Immediately the light went out from his eyes and he had to seek some one to lead him. On account of this miracle Paulus was convinced, and he became an earnest Christian, whose influence brought many others to accept the gospel.

PAUL AND BARNABAS ARE DRIVEN FROM ANTIOCH.

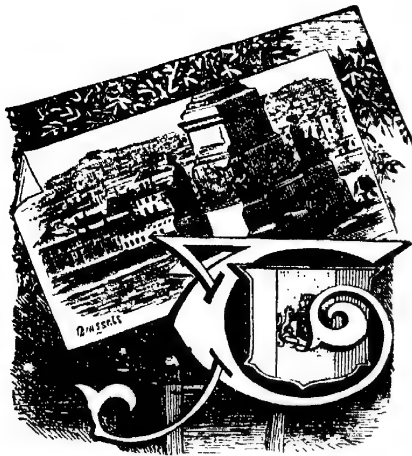
Paul and Barnabas left Paphos after a season and went to a town called Perga, on the river Centrus, in Asia Minor. Here they were received with such hostility that Mark, of faint heart, left his companions and returned to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas made their stay also short in Perga, and went to Antioch in Pisidia, or Asia Minor, which, like the Antioch of Syria, was founded by Nicator, the son of Antiochus. Here Paul preached in the Jewish synagogues and first announced to the Jews the gospel of salvation to the Gentiles. He recited, in eloquent language, the history of the prophets, and reminded his hearers, as Stephen had done, of the wickedness and perverseness of the Jewish people. He then explained to them the gospel of Jesus and besought them to embrace it, though at the same time he intimated his prophetic knowledge that they would reject it.

THE PEOPLE SACRIFICED TO PAUL, BUT AFTERWARD STONED HIM.

Paul and Barnabas had to flee from Antioch, but God directed their footsteps aright and they went to Iconium, which is on the western limit of Lycaonia, in Asia Minor. Here they renewed their ministry, and by preaching in the synagogues they gained many converts of both Jews and Gentiles. But their enemies were on the alert, and soon drove them from Iconium, from whence they came to a city, not far distant, called Lystra. While Paul was preaching here a man lame from birth was brought and set down beside the apostle. Paul, perceiving that the afflicted one had faith, in the presence of the large concourse of people before him, cried out in a loud voice: "Stand

upright on thy feet!" Immediately the lame man went leaping for joy, and giving praise for his restoration. When the people saw this wondrous miracle, they declared that the apostles were gods, sent down from heaven in the likeness of men, and they called Paul *Mercury*, and Barnabas they believed to be *Jupiter*, which were the names of their two gods. Their belief was so great that the priests brought oxen and sacred vessels, and an altar from the idols' temple, and prepared to sacrifice to them. But when Paul and Barnabas saw what was about to be done they quickly forbade such a sacrilege, assuring the people that they were only men like themselves, but sent to persuade them from worshipping idols, and to turn their worship to the true God. So fickle were these people, that those who had been most earnest in their offerings now became inflamed against them, declaring they were impostors and wicked men worthy of a blasphemer's death. The feeling against Paul and Barnabas continued to increase until the Jews made an attack upon them. Barnabas escaped injury, but Paul was stricken down and stoned until his persecutors believed him dead. They accordingly dragged his body outside of the city and left it for carrion birds to feast on. Some of Paul's friends, however, went to bring the body back and give it burial, but as they were standing about preparing a litter, Paul suddenly rose up and returned with them to the city, restored by God, but he did not tarry long, for the cry was against him. Therefore leaving Lystra, Paul again found Barnabas, and the two continued travelling together through all the cities of western Asia Minor, and though bitterly persecuted everywhere, their zeal was in no wise diminished.





CHAPTER XXXV.

PAUL, AND BARNABAS DISPUTE.

THE second missionary journey of St. Paul began within a very short time after the decision of the elders respecting the Mosaic law. He first returned to Antioch, presumably for certain instructions, and from thence he journeyed through Cilicia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia and the Troad. From this latter place he went to Europe, Macedonia, Athens and Corinth. Barnabas, however, did not accompany him, for on account of a dispute between the two over the desire of Barnabas to take Mark with him, they separated, Barnabas setting sail for Cyprus with Mark, while Paul pursued his way in the company of Silas. Notwithstanding the evil that was done him by the people of Lystra, Paul stopped there again on his second journey, but it is not related that he offered to preach. We are merely told that he found a young man in the city named Timothy, who was known as a devout and God-fearing person, and at his request Paul took him as a companion.

Paul's next stopping-place was at Troas, near the sea-coast, where at night he beheld a vision of an angel standing before him, who said, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." This call, which he knew was from God, he at once responded to, and taking a ship he sailed for Philippi, taking Silas with him, but of Timothy no mention is made. Upon arriving at Philippi the two apostles went on the Sabbath to a place beside the river, just on the outskirts of the town, where the Jews were accustomed to meet for prayer, from which we are led to infer that there was no synagogue in the place. As they sat here a woman named Lydia, who sold purple cloths, came to attend them, and with her Paul conversed concerning the ministry of Christ and of the gospel. She listened with rapt attention and was soon converted, being baptized, with all her family. After this Paul and Silas, at her request, made her house their home while in Philippi.

PAUL, AND SILAS ARE SCOURGED BY THE PEOPLE.

The apostles preached daily to the people, but were greatly annoyed by a young woman who had the reputation of forecasting events, by which she earned much money for those to whom she was in service. It is to be in-

ferred that the woman was an idiot, or afflicted with a mild lunacy, which in early times, was often regarded as a mark or evidence of collusion with familiar spirits. She followed Paul and Silas about, crying out, "These men are the servants of God, who show us how we may be saved." To avoid this annoyance, perhaps as much as for the good deed itself, Paul at length turned and said to the evil spirit that possessed her, "I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her." At these words the young woman was relieved and came into possession of her right mind, so that she was no longer profitable to her masters.

Being deprived of an income which the ravings of a poor imbecile brought them, the masters of the girl became so incensed at Paul and Silas that they seized them and made a charge to the rulers that they were teaching the people a false doctrine.

On this accusation the ruler commanded that the apostles be scourged and then thrown into prison, that it might be decided afterward what further punishment would be inflicted.

The stripes which they received were very severe and left them quite exhausted, but notwithstanding their pitiable condition they were not only put into a dark and



"DO THYSELF NO HARM."

loathsome prison, but their feet and ankles were bound in the stocks so that they were unable to move. Faith and hope, however, sustained them in this trying hour. In the night they fell to praying and to singing praises to God in the hearing of the other prisoners. In the middle watch, while thus engaged, suddenly there was a great earthquake which shook the prison so violently that the doors flew open and the stocks burst from Paul and Silas's limbs. The keeper being aroused from his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, thought his prisoners must have gained their freedom, and knowing well the penalty which would be visited upon him for permitting his charge to escape, he seized a sword and was on the point of killing himself, when Paul cried out to him, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."

The jailor now knew that some wonderful manifestation had been made,

and procuring a light he came trembling into the cell where Paul and Silas were. Kneeling down before them he cried in passionate terms, "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?" and Paul answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The jailor listened to Paul's discourse about Jesus and became converted while standing in the dungeon, and carried the news of salvation to his family, who also were baptized. After this he brought food, and washed the wounds of the apostles and otherwise manifested his sympathy and joy.

In the morning the rulers sent officers to the prison with an order for the liberation of Paul and Silas, but they refused to accept their freedom. Paul's father was a freeman, although a Jew, though it is not known whether he had been so born or had purchased his liberty, as was often done. He was, therefore, not amenable to the Jewish laws, but was subject only to the Romans. Paul was, of course, a freeman, and it was against the law to scourge a Roman. Thus those who had so severely and unjustly punished Paul were in danger of having to suffer even death for their acts. Learning these facts, those who had procured his punishment came and begged him to go out of the city, and not prefer charges against them, which Paul at length consented to do.

THE PEOPLE AGAIN THREATEN PAUL.

Paul and Silas went from Philippi to another city in Macedonia called Thessalonica, where they preached for three days in the synagogues. Several Jews and Gentiles were converted, but a great number of the people were angered at the boldness with which they accused those who rejected the Gospel. This angry feeling increased until many of the Jews assembled and went in a body to the house where the apostles were staying, intending to mob them. The man whose hospitality Paul and Silas were receiving was named Jason, and so good a friend was he to the apostles that he hid them and gave himself up to the mob to do with him as they might choose. He was carried before the rulers charged with harboring men who had disobeyed the decrees of Cæsar, and who had declared that Jesus, and not Cæsar, was king. In the mean time Paul and Silas escaped out of the city by night and went to Berea. Jason was made to promise that he would no longer permit the apostles to remain in his house, after which he was let go, but he knew that the time thus gained would be sufficient to permit of the escape of those he had learned to love.

PAUL TEACHES IN ATHENS THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Paul remained in Berea only a short while, when another sedition was stirred up against him, and being advised by his friends to leave, he went thence to Athens, in Greece. Here he found a people apparently advanced in civilization, but who, amid all their culture and splendor, were grovelling and praying to idols. On every side were images set up, some of wood and others

made of precious metals; and there were also many splendid temples and altars for the worship of a hundred different idols. Before one of these altars Paul observed an inscription which read, "To the Unknown God."

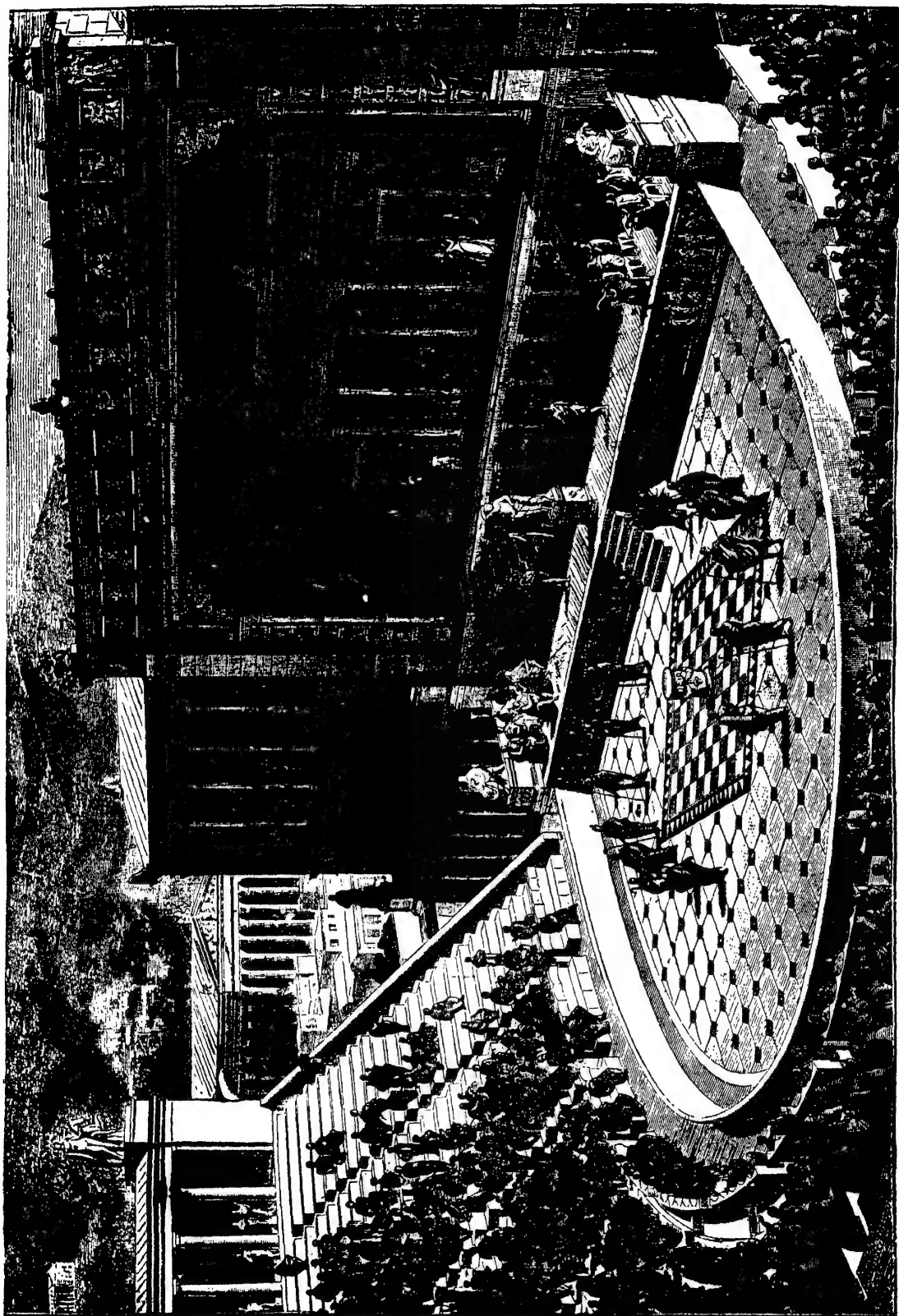
The following traditions have gathered round Paul's reference to this altar:

It is said that Dionysius, the Areopagite, was at Alexandria at the time of Christ's crucifixion. In that city he witnessed the supernatural darkness which covered the earth at the expiring of the Son of God, and knowing it was not caused by an eclipse, Dionysius concluded that it was the act of some god whose name he was not acquainted with; and on his return to Athens he erected the altar in question to the God who had suddenly wrapped the world in darkness.

According to another tradition, when the Athenians had lost a certain battle there appeared a spectre in the city, who informed them that he had inflicted the calamities upon them because, though they worshipped other gods, and celebrated games in their honor, there was no worship paid to him. The apparition vanished without leaving its name. The Athenians, desirous of doing honor to all gods, erected this altar, and on it placed the celebrated inscription.

Still another story affirms that the Athenians, on one occasion, being seized with a burning distemper which would not allow them to endure anything on their bodies, addressed themselves in vain to all the gods whom they had been accustomed to revere; but as they received no relief from their known deities they erected an altar "To the Unknown God," apprehending that some strange divinity had smitten them. When they recovered, of course, they attributed their cure to the deity whom they had at last done their best to propitiate.

Whatever may have given rise to the raising of an altar to the Unknown God, Paul declaimed against the sacrilege which it embodied, and preached Christ and through Him the way to salvation. The wise men of Athens for a time thought him to be some harmless enthusiast, but at length discovered with what strength of reasoning and great power of speech he explained his doctrine, so they invited him to preach to them on Mars' Hill, where the chief court of Athens met. In response to this invitation Paul met the wise philosophers of Greece, and others who had a curiosity to hear him, and spoke to them of their duties to the true God. Said he, "Him whom you worship as the Unknown God do I declare unto you, for that God is not made of stone, of brass, of gold, or of other substance, but it is He of the spirit, who made heaven and earth, and all that is therein, and to whom you owe everything, not only what you have and enjoy as the accumulation of your industry, but your lives as well." And Paul also spoke to them of Jesus, of His teachings, sufferings, death and resurrection. But when he spoke of Christ rising from the dead many mocked him, though not a few accepted his teachings and became converted, among whom was Dionysius, a member of the chief court.

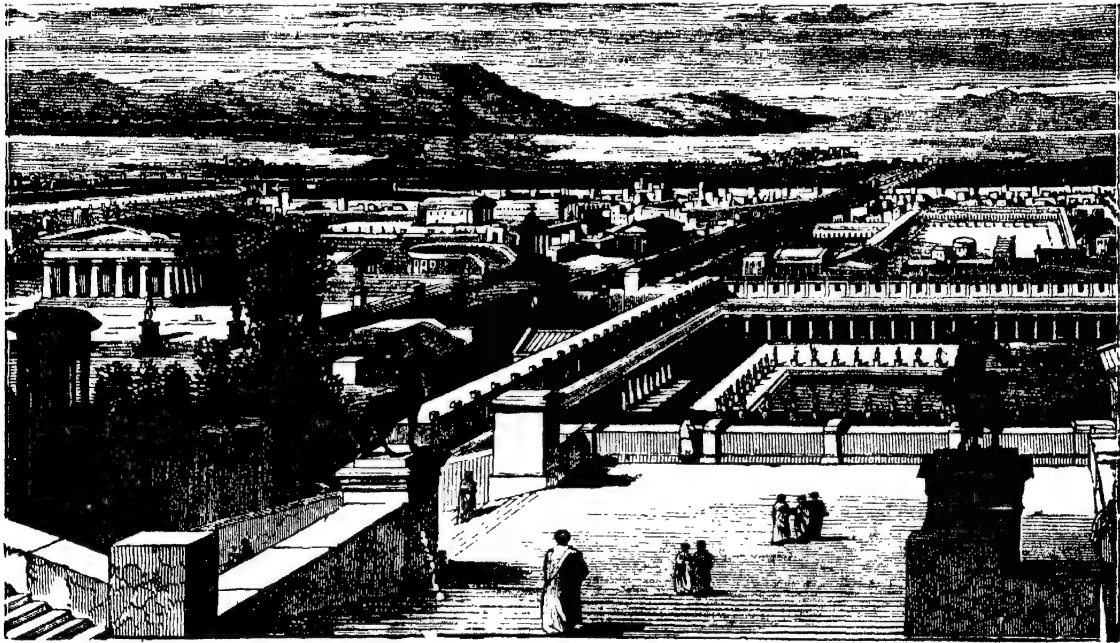


THEATRE OF DIONYSIUS AT ATHENS.—*Restored from recent excavations.*

To the left, above the spectators' seats, part of the enclosed colonnade. In the foreground, the orchestra with the thymole, then the proscenium, and beyond it the stage with its buildings.

PAUL IS APPREHENDED AGAIN AT CORINTH.

Paul next journeyed to the city of Corinth, where he was received by a Jew named Aquila, and his wife Priscilla, who were tent-makers. In his youth Paul had followed this trade, for though his father was rich, and he had no need to work, it was customary for all Jews to require their children to learn some trade. For some time, therefore, Paul worked with Aquila and his wife, and while they made tents they had opportunity to converse on holy things. Priscilla was soon converted under Paul's preaching, and became an earnest disciple for disseminating the gospel among her acquaintances. Aquila was



ANCIENT CORINTH.

also converted, and the two thereafter received from Paul the name of "his helpers in Christ Jesus."

The suffering which Paul had passed through in his mission as a disciple, which he no doubt often related, was perhaps what first won the sympathy of Aquila and Priscilla, for they had only a short time before been themselves driven from Rome by the cruel edict of Claudius, which expelled all Jews.

Paul remained in Corinth for eighteen months, working at his trade and preaching each Sabbath, at the end of which time the Jews again preferred charges against him, on which he was arrested and brought before a magistrate named Gallio, upon a complaint that he was preaching a false doctrine. Instead, however, of ordering him to be punished, the magistrate dismissed him, with some reproof to his accusers for apprehending a man merely on account of his religious opinions. But this did not end the trouble, for the

Gentiles, offended at Paul's enemies, seized the chief ruler of the synagogue and administered to him a severe beating with thongs even before Gallio, which leads us to believe that his sympathies were with Paul if not with his teachings.

AN EVIL SPIRIT PUNISHES IMPOSTOR JEWS.

Leaving Corinth at length, Paul went to Ephesus, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, and there with their aid he founded another church. He spent three years in this place, during which time he performed many miracles and converted hundreds of people. It is related that so great were his virtues that



AQUILA AND PRISCILLA LISTENING TO THE TEACHING OF PAUL.

handkerchiefs, aprons, and such things as he might handle, when laid upon the sick or those possessed of evil spirits, made them immediately well. Many wicked pretenders took advantage of the reputation which Paul had among the Ephesians for working miracles, and claimed the power also of casting out devils in Jesus' name. On one occasion seven brothers, who were Jews, attempted to relieve a sufferer by exorcising the evil spirit in the name of Jesus, but the spirit answered them, saying, "I know Jesus, and Paul I know also; but who are you?" Thus speaking, the man of an evil

spirit leaped upon them and beat and wounded them until they were glad to flee into a house to escape further punishment. This incident was followed by many pretenders to magic renouncing their profession, and bringing the books which they owned that taught such evil practices to a public place, where they were burned. The value of the books of magic that were thus destroyed was fifty thousand pieces of silver.

A MOB GOES CRYING THROUGH EPHESUS.

But though there was a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Ephesus, it did not so continue, for as the conversions multiplied anger and jealousy were excited by those who opposed the gospel, which led finally to Paul being driven from the city. The circumstance, however, was a most singular one, as we shall see: Among the numerous gods and goddesses worshipped by the Ephesians was one called Diana, to whom a magnificent temple was built of

cedar, cypress, marble, and gold. So great and splendid was this building that the Ephesians spent one hundred and twenty years in its construction, and for many centuries it was regarded as being the most wonderful, as well as beautiful, thing in the world. The image of Diana, which the temple sheltered, was made of gold, and more splendid even than the temple itself. So devoted were the people to this goddess that a large number of workers in brass and silver spent their entire time in making miniatures of the temple, which were hawked about in the streets by peddlers. Paul inveighed against this practice, and rebuked the people for their idolatry in such earnest words that a great jealousy was stirred up against him.

Demetrius, one of those who manufactured images for sale, was the first to set up a cry for Paul's punishment. He was able to make his influence effective by appealing to his workmen, reminding them that if Paul continued to convert the people their occupation would be gone; and he also reminded the citizens generally that if the worship of Diana were abandoned their beautiful temple, which now excited the admiration of the world, would fall into decay, and their pride would be destroyed.

So inflamed with passion did the Ephesians become under this harangue that with fairly one voice they shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" and began at once to search for the disciples. Gaius and Aristarchus, who had been Paul's companions, were first to fall into the hands of the populace, but no further harm was done than to carry them to the theatre where Paul was announced to address the people. Many of Paul's friends urged him not to go to the theatre, on account of the threatening cries of the citizens, who had now become a mob. This advice he finally consented to obey, by which wise action there is no doubt that a sickening spectacle of blood and ruin was prevented.

One of the chief officers of the city appeared in the theatre and called upon Demetrius to prefer his charges against the Christians, at the same time assuaging the excitement of the crowd by saying: "Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there among you who does not know that the people of our city are all worshippers of the great goddess Diana and of her image that fell down from heaven? Now, as no one denies this, you should be careful to do nothing in anger. You have brought here the men, called Christians, who have not robbed your temple, or spoken evil of your goddess. Therefore, if Demetrius, and the workmen who are with him, have any complaint to make against them, let him go before the court and prove what evil they have done. For we are in danger of being blamed by our rulers for this day's disturbance, because we can give no reason why it should have been made." By this speech the officer calmed the passion of the mob, and persuaded them to go to their homes and trouble the Christians no more.

A YOUNG MAN KILLED BY AN ACCIDENT IS RESTORED TO LIFE.

After the people had dispersed, Paul called to him the disciples, and bidding them farewell, left them, and went again into the land of Macedonia. When he had preached in the different cities of that country, he came again to Troas, in Asia. And on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to eat of the bread and drink of the wine, as Jesus had commanded, Paul preached to them, for he was going to leave Troas the next day. There were many lights in the upper chamber where they met together, and Paul continued speaking till the middle of the night.

And there sat in a window, listening to him, a young man named Eutychus, who, as Paul was long preaching, slept, and while asleep fell from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down to him and putting his arms around him, said to those who stood by, "Do not be troubled; he has come to life again." And the young man's friends when they saw that he was alive, took him up and were comforted. When Paul had returned to the upper chamber and eaten with the disciples, and talked with them a long while, even till it was morning, he left them to go from Troas.

And he and the brethren who were with him sailed to the city of Miletus, which was not far from Ephesus. And because he did not wish to go to Ephesus at that time, he sent for the elders of the church there, to come and meet him. When they had come, he spoke to them, saying, "You know, from the first day that I came among you, and for the three years that I stayed with you, how I lived at all times; serving the Lord humbly, yet having many sorrows and trials because of the Jews, who were always seeking to do me some harm. And you know that when I preached to you, I did not keep back anything that it was best for you to hear, even though it were something that might offend you; but I taught you in the synagogues and in your own houses, telling both the Jews and the Gentiles that they should repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"And now I am going up to Jerusalem, not knowing what shall happen to me there, except that in every city, the Holy Spirit tells me, bonds and afflictions are waiting for me. Yet none of these things make me afraid, neither do I care even though I be put to death, so that I may die with joy, and finish the work which the Lord Jesus has given me, as His minister, to do. And now I know that all of you who have heard me preach the gospel so often, shall see my face no more. Therefore, before I go, I want you to confess that if any of you be lost at the judgment day, the fault will not be mine; for I have not neglected to tell you how you may be saved, as God sent me to tell you."

After Paul had said these things, he kneeled down and prayed with them. And they all wept greatly, and put their arms around his neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they should see

his face no more. And they went with him to the ship in which he sailed away from Miletus. And he came to the city of Tyre, for there the ship was to unload her burden. Finding some disciples there he stayed with them seven days. As he was about to leave them, they, with their wives and children, came with him to the shore; and they all kneeled down together and prayed. And when they had bidden each other farewell, Paul and the brethren who journeyed with him went into the ship, and the disciples returned to their homes. And Paul came to the city of Cæsarea, and went into the house of Philip, one of the seven deacons on whom the apostles had laid their hands; it was that Philip who preached the gospel to the eunuch, as he rode in his chariot going back from Jerusalem to Ethiopia.

While Paul was in Philip's house, a prophet named Agabus came there, who took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and his feet, at the same time telling him it had been given him to know that he, Paul, would be likewise bound by the Jews at Jerusalem. When the disciples heard this prophecy they fell on his neck with tears and besought him to forego his intention, but he steadfastly refused, saying, "I am ready, as the Lord may will, not only to be bound but also to die at the hands of the enemies of Jesus."

PAUL ARRESTED IN THE TEMPLE.

When Paul parted from his friends at Cæsarea he went straightway to Jerusalem, where he was joyfully received by his brethren. On the day succeeding his arrival he met the elders of the church at a disciple's house and gave them an account of his labors, and of how Gentile nations had received the gospel. On the second day Paul went into the Temple to preach, but scarcely had he opened his mouth when some Jews from Asia laid violent hands upon him, accusing him of blasphemy and annulling the laws of Moses, and of bringing Gentiles into the Temple. A great uproar was immediately raised and the whole city thrown into confusion. A crowd gathered about Paul when he was brought into the streets, many of whom began pelting him with stones and sticks, but his life was saved by a squad of soldiers who rushed in and took him away from the blood-thirsty villains who sought his life. Paul was at once bound with chains and taken toward the castle, but so vindictive were the Jews that they seemed resolved to kill him, and would have done so had not the soldiers surrounded him and thus exposed their own bodies to the murderous missiles that were hurled at him. When once safe within the castle Paul asked permission of the captain to speak, to which the officer replied, "Art thou not that Egyptian who did lead men out into the wilderness?" Shortly before the arrest of Paul a man from Egypt had made his appearance in Jerusalem, declaring that he was a prophet anointed by God to foretell what should befall the people. Many persons were deceived by him, and were led away from their homes after surrendering to him all their property. It was this impostor which the officer supposed Paul to be. When, therefore,

Paul convinced him that he was a free-born Jew of Tarsus, the officer gave him permission to speak to the crowd below as he had requested. When the people at length consented to hear him and had become quiet, Paul spoke in Hebrew somewhat after this manner:

"I am, of a truth, a Jew born in Tarsus, but brought up in Jerusalem under the instruction of Gamaliel, who taught me in all the laws of Moses. In my early years I was as diligent in compelling a rigid observance of those laws as you; nay, I even persecuted and desired the death of all Christians, and many, both men and women, did I throw into prison. Nor was my labor of persecution confined to Jerusalem, but I asked for letters of authority to go to Damascus and to seize and imprison all the Christians that I might find there. But as I was on my way there a wonderful thing was done for me, by which I was made to know the sinfulness of my ways. While I was journeying near the walls of Damascus, suddenly a blazing light fell upon me so that I was stricken to the ground, and as I lay there helpless and confused a voice spoke, saying, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' And when I asked who it was that spoke, the reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.' And when I asked what I should do it was told me to go into Damascus, where it would be given me to know."

Paul also explained to his hearers all that had happened him thereafter, and how Jesus had told him to go unto all nations of the Gentiles and preach the gospel to them that would receive it.

THE PEOPLE AGAIN TRY TO STONE PAUL.

The Jews listened patiently to Paul's discourse until he told that he had carried his ministry to the Gentiles, at which they became boisterous again and shouted, "Kill him, kill him; such a man is unworthy to live." The soldiers, however, prevented them from doing him violence, but a number of those most vengeful declared that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed him. On account of these threats the chief captain of the soldiers determined not to bring Paul before the council on the following day, but to take him directly to the Roman governor at Cæsarea, which was sixty miles from Jerusalem. The guard detailed to convey the prisoner to Cæsarea carried with them a letter written by the chief captain and addressed to the governor, whose name was Felix, informing him of the circumstance of Paul's arrest and uttering the opinion that the prisoner had done nothing worthy of punishment.

When Paul was brought before Felix he was questioned as to the place of his birth and the manner by which he became a free man, after which he was thrown into prison to await the arrival of his accusers, who had sent a letter saying they would appear in a few days.

At the expiration of five days Ananias, the high-priest, and other members of the council came to Cæsarea, accompanied by a lawyer named Ter-

tullus, who was engaged to prosecute Paul. The case was brought before the governor without delay and Tertullus opened the prosecution with a speech of condemnation, in which he charged Paul with having stirred up sedition, but was worthy of punishment chiefly because he had preached to both Jew and Gentile a new religion and had taught that Jesus, who was crucified, was the Son of God. When he had finished talking a number of Jews were introduced as witnesses to prove the accusations made, after which Paul was permitted to speak. He manifested no fear or excitement, but in an unimpassioned



PAUL A GUEST IN THE HOUSE OF FELIX, EXPOUNDING THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled."—ACTS xxiv. 25.

and dignified manner gave an account of his ministry, of the good he had sought to do, of how he had wronged no man, and how while believing in the Jewish laws and religion, yet had he with an approving conscience taught that Jesus was the Christ to the Gentile as well as Jew.

When Paul had left off speaking he was remanded to prison and kept in durance for two years, though he was allowed considerable liberty, and was even brought several times to Felix's house as a guest. Felix was succeeded as governor by Festus, to whom the Jews appealed anew that Paul might be returned to Jerusalem for trial. But Festus refused the request and replied

that his prisoner should be condemned, if at all, at Cæsarea, so that the Jews were compelled to appear there again to renew their accusations.

When his case was again brought to trial Paul was asked whether he would consent to go to Jerusalem or would appeal to Cæsar, which was an intimation to him that if found guilty the punishment awarded him might be death. It was a law at the time that any Roman charged with a capital crime had the right of an appeal to Cæsar, and as Paul was a free man he had this privilege, which, understanding the feeling against him at Jerusalem, he availed himself of. Before sending him away to Rome, however, it happened that Agrippa—another governor, procurator, or king, whose exact office is not known—came to visit Festus, and having heard of Paul and his wisdom requested that he be brought before him. Excuse was accordingly made for the pretense of a new trial, and Paul was again brought before the tribunal, loaded with chains.

Paul's speech before the two rulers, Festus and Agrippa, was the most memorable he ever uttered, and thrilled the very souls of the governors, almost persuading them to embrace Christianity. They would have gladly released him now, but for the fact that he had appealed to Cæsar, which took the case out of Festus's hands, though he had found occasion to call him before the tribunal after this appeal had been made.

THE SHIPWRECK OF ST. PAUL.

It was only a short while after being called before Agrippa when Paul was given in charge of a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan cohort, who had also several other prisoners, to convey to Rome. There was evidently a considerable company of criminals, of which Paul was reckoned by the Jews as the greatest, and these were all thrown promiscuously together in the hold of the vessel, and the voyage to Rome was begun. This was about sixty years after Christ, and probably in the month of September, toward the season when storms are most frequent. The voyage was slow on account of the vessel having to make so many landings along the coast, and far into October less than two-thirds of the trip had been completed. While making a run between Cape Matala and Port Phoenix, along the coast of Crete, a typhoon came suddenly down on the vessel from out the northeast, and raged with such violence that it was impossible to do more than let her scud before the wind. The ship thus drove furiously on to the coast of an island named Clauda. Here the waves wrenched her so that she began taking water very rapidly, and the only hope of escape seemed now to lie in the single small boat that was towed behind the vessel. The cargo was thrown overboard, and every thing done to lighten the ship, but, while she was kept afloat a considerable time, the tempest did not abate, and day after day hope of rescue appeared to grow less. In this desperate condition Paul spoke to the captain, bidding

him not fear, for it had been given him to know, by an angel messenger, that, while the vessel would be lost, all on board would yet be saved.

On the fourteenth night of the storm, Paul bid the sailors to refresh themselves with food, for in their excitement and fear they had eaten nothing for several days. They, accordingly, ate the food that Paul had blessed, and then prepared to leave the vessel, which was now driven upon the ground, when, being held fast, it was soon broken in pieces. The soldiers now advised



ST. PAUL IS SHIPWRECKED.

the centurion in charge to kill all the prisoners, in order that none might escape; but his desire to save Paul prevented him from issuing such a cruel order, but instead he commanded every one that could swim to cast himself into the sea, and that those who could not should provide themselves with something to upbear them and make to shore, which they did, and all were saved. The crew and passengers of the vessel numbered two hundred and seventy-six persons, who distributed themselves about the island and sought shelter and food wherever they could find it. The chief man on the island was named Publius, who, seeing the disaster, came down to the shore and gave such assistance as he was able. He also invited Paul to his house, and enter-

tained him three days. It chanced that the father of Publius fell ill of a dangerous fever some time before, and was near unto death when Paul came into the house. One of the first things that Paul did, therefore, after entering the house, was to lay his hands on the sufferer, by which gracious act he was immediately restored. Paul afterward healed many of the people that were on the island of all manner of sickness, and converted hundreds to Christianity.

THE RIOT IN ROME AND PAUL'S DEATH.

For three months Paul and his companions remained on the island before opportunity was offered for them to continue their journey. After due time Paul reached Rome, where he was received by many Christians who had heard of his coming, and through whose influence he was permitted to occupy a house to himself under nominal guard, but his chains were not removed. Paul made an appeal to the Jews of Rome, reciting the wrongs that he had suffered from his countrymen at Jerusalem, and so affected his hearers that he was asked to preach the doctrine for which he had been so harshly condemned.

From this date history tells us almost nothing about Paul, and what little has been written has as often been contradicted. Some writers declare that he preached in Rome for a period of two years and made many converts, during which time he lived in a house to himself. It appears that he was set free, and went again to Jerusalem, after which he returned to Rome and was in the city at the time of its partial destruction by fires and massacre of Christians.

Profane history tells us that in the year A. D. 64, the city of Rome was visited by a conflagration greater than any that had ever before raged in the world. For six days the city was a sea of flame, consuming palace and hovel alike, until six of the fourteen wards of the place, nearly one-half of the city, were entirely destroyed. The people were panic-stricken and rushed hither and thither in maddening crowds, helpless with fear, and desperate with torture. From desperation the people at length grew suspicious that the city had been fired by the orders of Nero who, during the conflagration, repaired to the turret of his villa and publicly enacted a drama of his own composing, entitled "The Sack of Troy." He had fired Rome to lend realism to the dreadful tragedy of his theatrical ambition.

From a suspicion the opinion of the wild masses quickly grew into conviction and then came an ominous muttering of vengeance, that even appalled the Emperor who could fiddle while his subjects saw their possessions melting to gratify his thirst for the terrible. He saw the cloud of wrath gathering and to avert the threatening result, he suddenly began, with truly theatrical transition, to descend from his imperious position to that of a zealous sympathizer with the sufferers. He went about among his people scattering money to those in need and apparently bewailing the calamity that his own orders had precipitated. But with all his show of sympathy suspicion was not wholly averted, and he perceived, by the portentous complaints that reached his ears,

that the populace demanded some sacrifice upon which to glut their ungovernable rage. To save his own degraded life he therefore caused a report to be circulated that the city had been fired by the Jews, and that hated new sect who called themselves Christians. Here were the victims for Roman rage and jealousy, for the Christians had made themselves despised because of the



LIONS DESTROYING THE CHRISTIANS.

piety and rigid precepts, so opposed to the licentiousness and Paganism of the wicked, crime-loving populace. It mattered not now who was the real criminal, since a commission to riot among the Jews and Christians had been virtually given by the bloody-minded Emperor. Hundreds of these innocent people were at once seized and carried away to the amphitheatre to furnish a specta-

cle for barbaric eyes. Pillars were set around the race-course to which men, women and children were chained, their lower limbs covered with flax dipped in pitch and then set on fire. While these human torches were flaming, other victims were brought out into the enclosure and hungry Numidian lions turned loose among them. The screams of the burning and the cries of terror and torture from those being torn by the feasting lions, while flashing lights from the numerous pillars, through clouds of boiling smoke and heavy odors of pitch and burning flesh, constituted a spectacle so horrible that we recoil with a sense of oppression and heart sickness at the very mention of such deeds of fiendish depravity and man's inhumanity. In this dreadful riot and holocaust Paul is said to have perished, but whether he was burned, decapitated, fed to the lions or crucified, is not recorded. Peter, however, who must have returned to Rome with Paul, on his second visit, fell a victim to the Roman fury, and is said to have been crucified head downwards, as were many others during that awful riot of merciless massacre. The close of Paul's life was thus more terribly dramatic than his labors had been eventful, but it was typical of such Christian faith and fortitude as makes the whole world at once pity and applaud: pity, that so noble a life should be so ill requited; and applaud, that he could so fearlessly face the mob, flames and executioner, and go to his doom crowned with the glory that awaits those faithful unto death.

VISIONS OF ST. JOHN.

The last book in the Bible, called Revelation, is the greatest enigma in the Holy Scriptures, and bears distinctly the sign of Divine mystery. The writer was St. John, but probably not the "beloved disciple" of Jesus, though certainly an apostle. Under the reign of Nero, John was exiled to the lonely island of Patmos for preaching the doctrine of the resurrection. He was treated with the same barbarity practised to-day by the Russian government on her Siberian exiles. But though John was made to delve in the mines, he found opportunity to write a description of many visions glorious to behold, which he saw through the inspiration given him by Jesus. These visions comprehended all that is in heaven, on earth and in the abode of perpetual darkness. He saw an angelic host surrounding the great throne, and the perfect triumph of Christ in the hosannas of eternal praise that were sung by redeemed saints. A vision of the judgment day was also given him to see, when the dead rose out of their graves and assembled before God to be judged according to their deeds. An angel appeared to him also, and taking him to the pinnacle of a mountain showed him a vision of the New Jerusalem, around which was a great wall with strong towers, and pierced by twelve gates, at each of which an angel stood guard. This city was built of pure gold, the walls were of precious stones, and the gates were of pearl. Over this beautiful city the mantle of night was never spread, but the light from God bathed its holy streets forever. This was the city of heavenly delight, the home for which every godly heart is longing, the empire of peace and love.

GOLDEN GEMS OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

The following exquisite examples of eloquent word painting are extracted from Dr. Joseph Parker's eulogy on Henry Ward Beecher, delivered in the Brooklyn Academy of Music, October 4, 1887:



O-DAY we bring an offering of flowers, gathered from gardens far and near, and tended by men to whom flowers are symbols and poems. To-day we do more than all this, for we first magnify God in His servant, and account all eulogy worthless that is not first religious. Mere eulogy is a waxen flower, that melts in the hand that proudly grasps it; but true eulogy is a living flower, rooted alike in earth and sun.

I cannot but think it was well that Henry Ward Beecher was a child of midsummer, coming among men when the days were longest and the whole ground was carpeted with flowers. His name might have been Midsummer. Out of that season he never passed. It was always June 24 with this child of light. The snow that lay upon him was the snow of blossoms. He came to earth in summer; he went to heaven in spring. Whenever he came among

men he brought June sunshine and music, and made even desponding and surly men feel that a fuller and warmer summer, "the Kingdom of Heaven" itself, was "at hand." Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight, and in our sight it is beautiful.

God himself made Henry Ward Beecher a humorist, gave him a taste for comedy, and enriched him with the grace of playfulness. He prayed the better that he laughed so well. His tears were the tenderer because his humor was so spontaneous and abundant. He never laughed at truth, at virtue, at piety, at poverty, at helplessness. He laughed at the fools who undertook to roll back the ocean, to grasp the infinite, and to be themselves the God whose existence they denied.

To know God, to love God, to accept Christ, to serve Christ, to magnify Christ, to grow in grace, in knowledge, and in truth, to be pure, wise, gentle, sympathetic, were the glowing dogmas which gave this immortal ministry its strength and glory. Yet there were minor lines in the Beecher sermon which a complete criticism must recognize. The sermon was often alive with the eager spirit of the day, and came sometimes near to being a Sunday editorial upon the supreme question of the moment. Then it accepted the felicitous assistance of humor, and grieved those who know not the uses to which irony and satire and banter may be put even on Sunday. The humor was often in the tone, often in the luminous smile, often in the eloquent eye. It was like the ministry of dew in nature—it added something to the rarest beauty and multiplied the sunflash that fell on it like a blessing.

Mr. Beecher's theological speculation was telescopic. He never returned to us to report that the universe is much smaller than he supposed it to be, and that God is infinitely further away than the wings of dream and hope can carry the inquiring soul. He always came back to announce that we know only in part, and should therefore prophesy only in part. He said in effect that in the universe of Truth horizon beyond horizon stretches in unimaginable range and splendor, constellation above constellation burns in solemn glory, and system within system rolls in silent light, compared with whose magnificence all that we know of day and summer is but a mitigation of darkness. How he himself shone like an intellectual planet as he told of the largeness of life and growth and destiny, and typified, in fullest hospitality of sympathy, the love which educates the universe toward completeness and liberty.

Every man who knew Mr. Beecher fixes his attention upon some incident, or sermon, or prayer, or speech, which best represents the genius or heart of the man. We make our idols, and join ourselves to them with affec-

tionate tenacity. Had I an artist at command I could order pictures that gold would never buy. I could say to the artist :

Paint Mr. Beecher coming into the ante-room of the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, in 1863 ; solemn, dignified, like a prophet conscious of his "burden"—eloquent in pathetic silence.

Paint him as I have seen him at Peekskill—Bascobel the blest—seated at the family altar on Sunday morning ; reading, singing, praying, then giving a father's kiss to every guest—man, woman and child.

Paint him when driving, Jehu-like, a span of thunder and lightning, with a fury that would have been fruitful of accidents, but that the horses knew him and loved his generous mastery.

Paint him in conversation, with all the April variety of his face, constant only in its truthfulness. Catch above all things the smile : the smile which began so far away—so dawn-like—and broadened into a summer morning. O painter, let me charge thee to seize that spirit smile.

Paint him, if thou canst paint comedy, in many a rollicking mood, every look a farce, every tone an irony, every attitude a caricature, laughing till the crimson tide flushed his shapely head with ominous fulness ; yet in all the hilarity not one word of bitterness, not one sting of spite.

But failing all these, I would have thee gather thy strength for one supreme effort ; nay, a miracle. Invoke all the ancestors of art and bid them help thee. Paint the church in which he worked ; let it be more a shadow than a geometric form ; the Sunday benediction has been pronounced ; the sun has long retired ; the white-haired pastor lingers that he may have an extra benediction through the medium of music ; his eyes are full of tears ; two little children unconsciously approach him and stand quite near ; he turns, he sees them, he lays a hand on each young head, then he kisses the wayfarers, and with his hands upon them or around them, the three walk away together one of them never to return.

DEATH THE TEACHER OF IMMORTALITY.

Never to return ! Say of such : "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat ; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Our sainted dead are alive evermore ! Death is swallowed up in victory—the grave is conquered—and heaven comes to our thought with friendlier familiarity. This is more than sentiment ; it is inspiration. It is strength that can carry the load of life ; it is enthusiasm that makes sorrow itself a sacrament. The sainted dead come to us in many a holy vision—

"Not to dwarf us by their stature,
But to show
To what bigness we may grow."

"I heard a great voice from heaven, saying, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." We know that such a voice can be heard from heaven only, for such music slumbers not in the harps of earth. We need resurrection to complete birth. The resurrection is an instinct as well as a doctrine. Birth without resurrection is most palpable cruelty. Then should we say—This God began to build, and was not able to finish ; We need not argue immortality—it is enough to feel it. Death itself is the best teacher of immortality. It makes immortality possible ; it makes immortality necessary. When it comes upon a man like Henry Ward Beecher, we cannot believe that it has ended the shining of such genius, the ministry of such love, the hopefulness of such aspiration. To-day he is nearer us than ever he was before.

"He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again."

Yet he is here—a watcher, not a critic ; here to bless, not to rebuke ; here to use all the old words of love with larger meanings ; here to give assurance that death is not the doorkeeper of heaven. I will not say that Henry Ward Beecher is absent. Do I not see him ? Do I not know those lamp-like eyes shining with joy above all words ? Can I be mistaken as to that voice whose subdued thunder has so often enchained and repaid my attention ? Can there be any doubt as to that calm and steadfast look ? I will speak to him. No impatient question will I ask. I will say : Loved one, husband, father, pastor, friend—Henry—we will soon—quite soon—almost immediately join thee, and so shall be

For ever with the Lord.

HEAVEN OUR HOME.



It cannot be that earth is man's only abiding place. It cannot be that our life is a bubble, cast up by the ocean of eternity, to float another moment upon its surface, and then sink into nothingness and darkness forever. Else why is it that the high and glorious aspirations which leap like angels from the temples of our hearts, are forever wandering abroad, unsatisfied? Why is it that the rainbow and the cloud come over us with a beauty that is not of earth, and then pass off and leave us to muse on their faded loveliness? Why is it that the stars which hold their festival around the midnight throne are set above the grasp of our limited faculties, and are forever mocking us with their unapproachable glory? Finally, why is it that bright forms of human beauty are presented to view, then taken from us, leaving the thousand streams of the affections to flow back in an Alpine torrent upon our hearts?

We are born for a higher destiny than of earth. There is a realm where the rainbow never fades; where the stars will be spread out before us like the islands that slumber on the ocean; and where the beautiful beings that here pass before us like visions will stay in our presence forever!

GEORGE D. PRENTICE.

A CHRISTIAN MAN'S LIFE.

A CHRISTIAN man's life is laid in the loom of time to a pattern which he does not see, but God does; and his heart is a shuttle. On one side of the loom is sorrow, and on the other is joy; and the shuttle, struck alternately by each, flies back and forth, carrying the thread, which is white or black, as the pattern needs; and, in the end, when God shall lift up the finished garment, and all its changing hues shall glance out, it will then appear that the deep and dark colors were as needful to beauty as the bright and high colors.

HUMILITY.

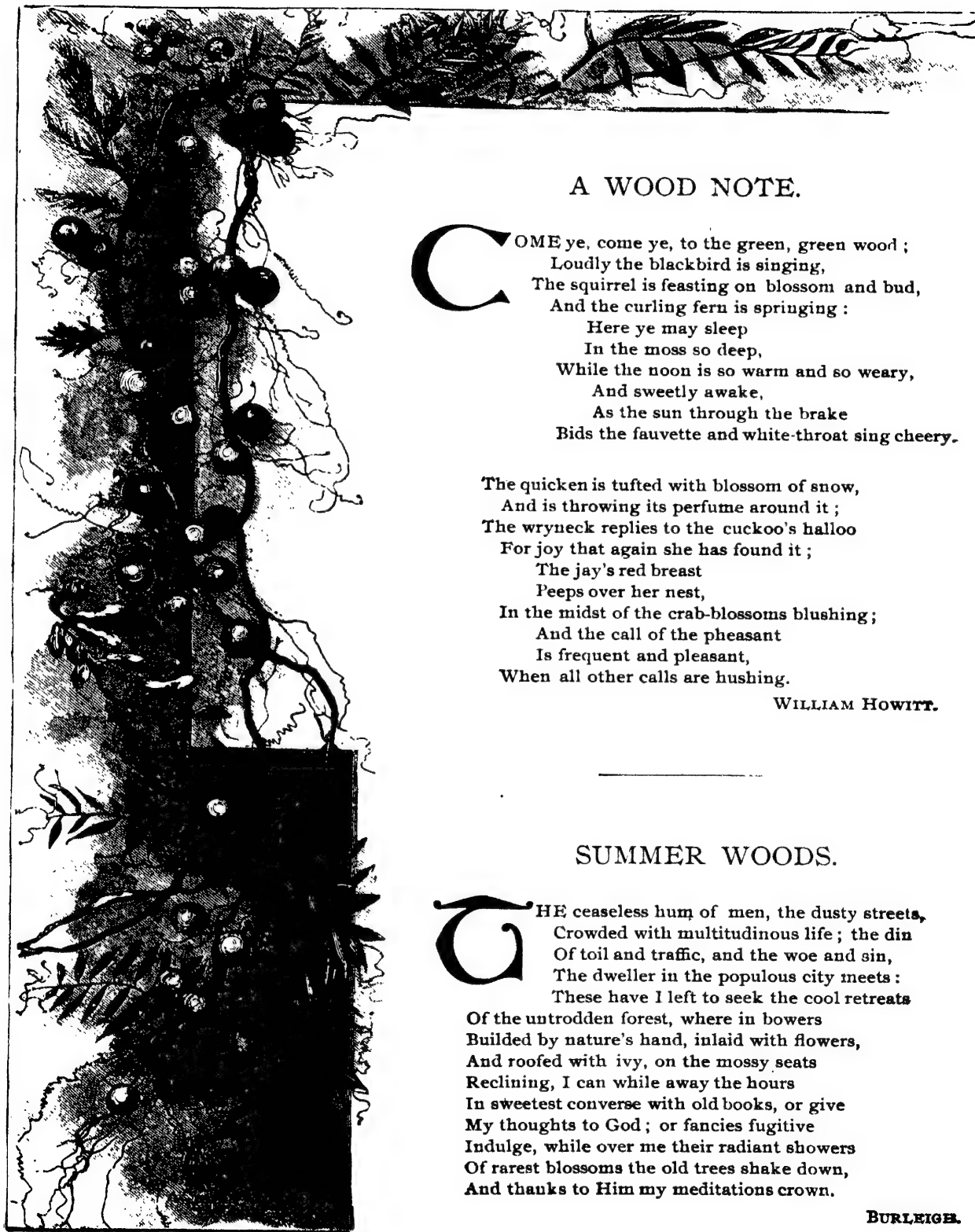
THE only true independence is in humility; for the humble man exacts nothing, and cannot be mortified—expects nothing, and cannot be disappointed. Humility is also a healing virtue; it will cicatrize a thousand wounds, which pride would keep forever open. But humility is not the virtue of a fool; since it is not consequent upon any comparison between ourselves and others, but between what we are and what we ought to be—which no man ever was.

WASHINGTON ALLSTON.

A BLESSED BANKRUPTCY.

I HEARD a man who had failed in business, and whose furniture was sold at auction, say that when the cradle, and the crib, and the piano went, tears would come, and he had to leave the house to be a man. Now, there are thousands of men who have lost their pianos, but who have found better music in the sound of their children's voices and footsteps going cheerfully down with them to poverty than any harmony of chorded instruments. Oh, how blessed is bankruptcy when it saves a man's children! I see many men who are bringing up their children as I should bring up mine, if, when they were ten years o'd, I should lay them on the dissecting table, and cut the sinews of their arms and legs, so that they could neither walk nor use their hands, but only sit still and be fed. Thus rich men put the knife of indolence and luxury to their children's energies, and they grow up fatted, lazy calves, fitted for nothing, at twenty-five, but to drink deep and squander wide; and the father must be a slave all his life in order to make beasts of his children. How blessed, then, is the stroke of disaster, which sets the children free, and gives them over to the hard, but kind bosom of poverty, who says to them "Work," and working makes them men!

AS EVERY instinct, or sense, has an end or design, and every emotion in man has its object and direction, we must conclude that the desire of communing with God is but a test of his being destined for a future existence, and the longing after immortality the promise of it.



A WOOD NOTE.

COME ye, come ye, to the green, green wood ;
 Loudly the blackbird is singing,
 The squirrel is feasting on blossom and bud,
 And the curling fern is springing :
 Here ye may sleep
 In the moss so deep,
 While the noon is so warm and so weary,
 And sweetly awake,
 As the sun through the brake
 Bids the fauvette and white-throat sing cheery.

The quicken is tufted with blossom of snow,
 And is throwing its perfume around it ;
 The wryneck replies to the cuckoo's halloo
 For joy that again she has found it ;
 The jay's red breast
 Peeps over her nest,
 In the midst of the crab-blossoms blushing ;
 And the call of the pheasant
 Is frequent and pleasant,
 When all other calls are hushing.

WILLIAM HOWITT.

SUMMER WOODS.

THE ceaseless hum of men, the dusty streets,
 Crowded with multitudinous life ; the din
 Of toil and traffic, and the woe and sin,
 The dweller in the populous city meets :
 These have I left to seek the cool retreats
 Of the untrodden forest, where in bowers
 Builded by nature's hand, inlaid with flowers,
 And roofed with ivy, on the mossy seats
 Reclining, I can while away the hours
 In sweetest converse with old books, or give
 My thoughts to God ; or fancies fugitive
 Indulge, while over me their radiant showers
 Of rarest blossoms the old trees shake down,
 And thanks to Him my meditations crown.

BURLEIGH.



CATCHING SHADOWS.

WHEN the day and dark are blended,
And the weary tasks are ended,
Sits the little mother humming,
Waiting sound of his dear coming,
Who, the lord of Love's domain,
Yet to her yields all again.

Then the winsome, wee one, nestling
In her bosom, spies the wrestling,
Dancing shadows rise and fall,
Phantom-like upon the wall,
As the flickering firelight flashes
From among the flames and ashes.

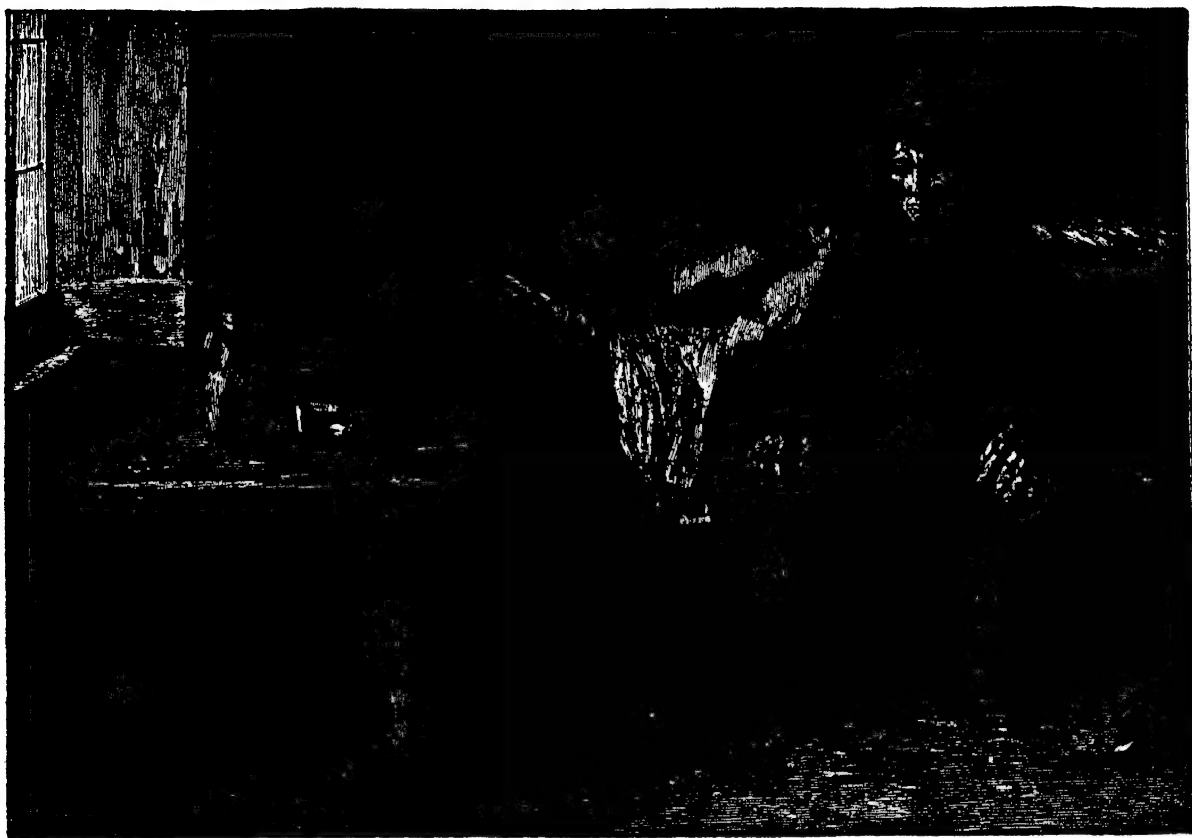
Loud he laughs, in baby glee,
At their elfin revelry;
At the lilting, lithe, elastic,
Airy, fairy forms fantastic,
Now receding, now advancing,
Coy as love from young eyes glancing.

Not eclipse and umbrage dim,
These are sentient things to him;
Wherefore wistful welcome lending,
Tiny hands are soon extending,
Snatching, catching, quick and eager,
At the shapes that him beleaguer.

Oft he clasps them, grasps them, yet
They but fool him, they coquet;
Vain his striving and endeavor,
They elude and mock him ever,
They delude and still deceive him,
They perplex and vex and grieve him.

Much he wonders, ponders why
When they beckon yet they fly,
And the tear in his blue eye
Shines as rain from sunny sky.
Soon he turns—the cruel seeming
Fades away, and he lies dreaming.

E. HANNAFORD.



“POOR WIFE, SHE IS DEAD!”

POOR wife, she is dead, and I am alone;
 'Tis the debt which all mortals must
 pay,
 Yet of all the sorrow I've felt in my
 life,
 I never knew grief till to-day.

As the sun went down 'neath the hilltops
 And the shadows stole in o'er my head,
 So the light of her life, and mine, went out
 And left me alone with my dead.

Full two scores of years we walked side by side,
 Each a staff to the other alway;
 But the angel of death has taken my help,
 So what can I do now but pray?—

Bless thou us, Lord, in the kingdom above,
 Whence Thy grace so freely is given.
 So long have we journey'd together on earth,
 Receive us together in heaven.

J. W. BUEL.

THE RAINY DAY.

THE day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
 It rains, and the wind is never weary;
 The vine still clings to the mouldering
 wall,
 But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
 And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
 It rains, and the wind is never weary;

My thoughts still cling to the mouldering past,
 But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
 And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
 Behind the clouds is the sun still shining.
 Thy fate is the common fate of all,
 Into each life some rain must fall,
 Some days must be dark and dreary.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

A YEAR IN HEAVEN.

ONE year among the angels, beloved, thou hast been,
 One year has heaven's white portal shut
 back the sound of sin;
 And yet no voice, no whisper, comes floating
 down from thee,
 To tell us what glad wonder a year of heaven
 may be.

Our hearts before it listen—the beautiful closed gate;
 The silence yearns around us; we listen and we wait;
 It is the heavenly birthday; on earth thy lilies bloom;
 In thine immortal garland canst find for these no room?

Thou lovedst all things lovely when walking with us
 here;
 Now from the heights of heaven seems earth no longer
 dear?

We cannot paint thee moving in white-robed state afar,
 Nor dream our flower of comfort a cool and distant star.

Heaven is but life made richer; therein can be no loss;
 To meet our love and longing thou hast no gulf to cross;
 No adamant between us uprears its rocky screen;
 A veil before us only:—thou hast the light serene.

That veil 'twixt earth and heaven a breath might waft
 aside:

We breathe one air, beloved; we follow one dear Guide;
 Passed into open vision, out of our mist and rain,
 Thou see'st how sorrow blossoms, how peace 'is won
 from pain.

And half we feel the leaning from thy deep calm bliss,
 To say of earth, "Beloved, how beautiful it is!
 The lilies in this splendor—the green leaves in this dew;
 Oh! earth is also heaven, with God's light clothed
 anew!"

Because we know thee near us, and nearer still to Him
 Who fills the cup of being with glory to the brim,
 We will not stain with grieving our fair, tho' fainter
 light,
 But cling to thee in spirit as if thou wert in sight.

And, as in waves of beauty the swift years come and go,
 Upon celestial currents our deeper life shall flow,
 Hearing from that sweet country where blighting never
 came.
 Love chime the hours immortal, in earth and heaven
 the same.

LUCY LARCOM.

DEATH THE GATEWAY TO JOY.

[Extracts from a Sermon.]



PERSONS who are old have more friends in heaven than here. Just take the census. Take some large sheet of paper and begin to record the names of those who have emigrated to the other shore—the companions of your school days, your early business associates, the friends of middle life, and those who more recently went away. Can it be that they have been gone so long you do not care any more about them, and you do not want their society? Oh, no! There have been days when you have felt that you could not endure it another moment away from their blessed companionship. They have gone. You say you would not like to bring them back to this world of trouble, even if you had the power. It would not do to trust you. God would not give you resurrection power. Before to-morrow morning you would be rattling at the gates of the cemetery, crying to the departed: "Come back to the cradle where you slept! Come back to the hall where you used to play! Come back to the table where you used to sit!" and there would be a great burglary in heaven. No, no! God will not trust you with resurrection power, but He compromises the matter and says: "You cannot bring them where you are, but you can go where they are." They are more lovely now than ever. Were they beautiful here, they are more beautiful there.

Columbus risked his life to find this continent, and shall we shudder to go out on a voyage of discovery which shall reveal a vaster and more brilliant country? John Franklin risked his life to find a passage between icebergs, and shall we dread to find a passage to eternal summer? Men in Switzerland travel up the heights of the Matterhorn with alpenstock, and guides, and rockets, and ropes, and, getting halfway up, stumble and fall down in horrible massacre. They just want to say they had been on the tops of those high peaks. And shall we fear to go out for the ascent of the eternal hills which start a thousand miles beyond where stop the highest peaks of the Alps, and when in that ascent there is no peril?

Friends, the exit from the world, or death if you please to call it, to the Christian is glorious explanation. It is demonstration. It is illumination. It is sunburst. It is the opening of all the windows. It is shutting up the catechism of doubt, and the unrolling of all the scrolls of positive and accurate information. Instead of

standing at the foot of the ladder and looking up, it is standing at the top of the ladder and looking down. It is the last mystery taken out of botany, and geology, and astronomy, and theology.

Oh, will it not be grand to have all questions answered? The perpetually recurring interrogation point changed for the mark of exclamation. All riddles solved. Who will fear to go out on that discovery, and when all the questions are to be decided which we have been discussing all our lives? Who shall not clap his hands in the anticipation of that blessed country, if it be no better than through holy curiosity? When I meet my Lord Jesus Christ, of what shall I first delight to hear Him speak? Now I think what it is: I shall first want to hear the tragedy of His last hours, and then Luke's account of the crucifixion will be nothing, while from the living lips of Christ the story shall be told of the gloom that fell, and the devils that arose, and the fact that upon His endurance depended the rescue of a race, and there was darkness in the sky, and there was darkness in the soul, and the pain became more sharp, and the burdens became more heavy, until the mob began to swim away from the dying vision of Christ, and the cursing of the mob came to His ear more faintly, and His hands were fastened to the horizontal piece of the cross, and his feet were fastened to the perpendicular piece of the cross, and His head fell forward in a swoon as He uttered the last moan and cried: "It is finished."

All heaven will stop to listen until the story is done, and every harp will be put down, and every lip closed, and all eyes fixed on the divine narrator until the story is done; and then, at the tap of the baton, the eternal orchestra will rouse up, finger on string of harp and lips to the mouth of trumpet, there shall roll forth the oratorio of the Messiah: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive blessing, and riches, and honor, and glory, and power, world without end!

What He endured, oh, who can tell,
To save our souls from death and hell?

REV. T. DEWITT TALMAGE.

SHUN THE BOWL.

BY thy dread of sin and sorrow,
By thy fear of shame and strife,
By each dark, despairing morrow,
Lengthening still a wretched life;
By the chains that, worse than iron,
Burn the brain and sear the soul,
By the torments it environ,
Dearest children, shun the bowl!

By the hopes thou wouldst not wither,
By the love that round thee clings,
Never turn thy footsteps whither
Wild the maniac drunkard sings!
Enter not the poisoned vapor,
Where oaths and fumes together roll,
Kneel and pray by lonely taper,
Pray for strength and shun the bowl.

By bleared eye, and voice whose quaking
Fills the agony within,
By the palsied hand, which shaking,
Ever lifts the draught of sin,
By the torment still increasing,
Gnawing brain and harrowing soul,
Thirst unsated and unceasing,
Dearest children, shun the bowl!

By each holy kiss, thy mother
On thy infant forehead pressed,
Love of father, sister, brother,
All that purifies thy breast;
By the hope of heaven within thee,
Oh! debase not mind and soul—
Let not sin's own chalice win thee;
Dearest children, shun the bowl.

ELIZA H. BARKER.

IN the best books, great men talk to us, give us their most precious thoughts, and pour their souls into ours. God be thanked for books! They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Books are the true levellers. They give to all who will faithfully use them the society, the spiritual presence, of the best and greatest of our race. No matter how poor I am—no matter though the prosperous of my own time will not enter my obscure dwelling—if the sacred writers will enter and take up their abode under my roof, if Milton will cross my threshold to sing to me of Paradise, and Shakespeare to open to me the worlds of imagination and the workings of the human heart, and Franklin to enrich me with his practical wisdom—I shall not pine for want of intellectual companionship, and I may become a cultivated man, though excluded from what is called the best society in the place where I live.

WM. ELLERY CHANNING.

· skies · of
dark · unwelcome · cloud,

· its · purple · shadowed ·

· the · paling · blue ;
· more , · but · fire

What · if · doubt · be · G
Like · the · shadow ·

REST.

BEAUTIFUL toiler, thy work all done,
Beautiful soul into glory gone,
Beautiful life with its crown now won,
God giveth thee rest.
Rest from all sorrows, and watching and
fears,
Rest from all possible sighing and tears,
Rest through God's endless, wonderful
years—
At home with the blest.

Beautiful spirit, free from all stain,
Ours the heartache, the sorrow and pain,
Thine is the glory and infinite gain—
Thy slumber is sweet.

Peace on the brow and the eyelids so calm,
Peace in the heart, 'neath the white folded palm,
Peace dropping down like a wondrous balm
From the head to the feet.

"It was so sudden," our white lips said,
"How we shall miss her, the beautiful dead,
Who take the place of the precious one fled?
But God knoweth best.
We know He watches the sparrows that fall,
Hears the sad cry of the grieved hearts that call,
Friends, husband, children, He loveth them all—
We can trust for the *rest*."

MARY T. LATHROP. /

ETERNITY will be one glorious morning, with the sun ever climbing higher and higher; one blessed long-time, and yet richer summer—every plant in full flower, but every flower the bud of a lovelier.

NATURE is like an Æolian harp, a musical instrument whose tones are the re-echo of higher strings within us.



"I KNOW I'M NOT SO FORTYFIED NOR FIFTYFIED AS YOU!"

DECEMBER AND MAY.

"Crabbed age and youth cannot live together."

SHAKESPEARE.

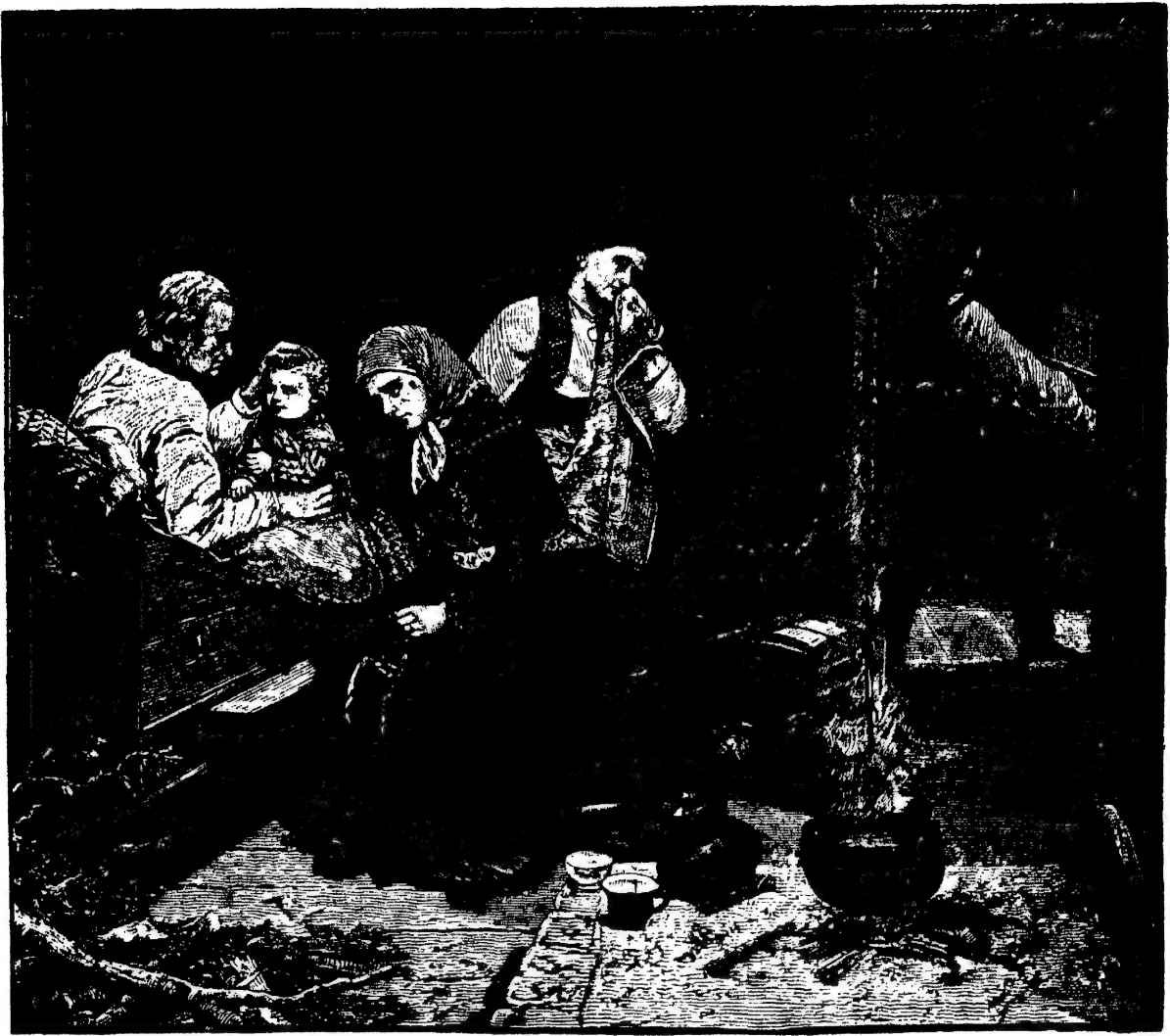
SAID Nestor to his pretty wife, quite sorrowful one day,
 "Why, dearest, will you shed in pearls those lovely eyes away?
 You ought to be more fortyfied."
 "Ah, brute, be quiet, do.
 I know I'm not so fortyfied, nor fiftyfied, as you!"

"Oh, men are vile deceivers all, as I have ever heard,
 You'd die for me you swore, and I—I took you at your word,
 I was a tradesman's widow then—a pretty change I've made;
 To live and die the life of one a widower by trade!"

"Come, come, my dear, these flighty airs declare, sober truth,
 You want as much in age, indeed, as I can want youth;
 Besides, you said you liked old men, though now at n you huff."
 "Why, yes," she said, "and so I do—but you're not o enough!"

"Come, come, my dear, let's make it up, and have quiet hive;
 I'll be the best of men—I mean I'll be the best alive.
 Your grieving so will kill me, for it cuts me to the core
 "I thank ye, sir, for telling me, for now I'll grieve t more!"
 THOMAS HOOD.

WE are what the past has made us. The results of the past are ourselves. The perishable emotio and the momentary acts of bygone years, are the scaffolding on which we built up the being that we are.



TWO PICTURES.

AN old farm-house with meadows wide
 And sweet with clover on each side;
 A bright-eyed boy who looks from out
 The door with woodbine wreathed
 about,
 And wishes this one thought all day.
 "Oh, if I could but fly away
 From this dull spot, the world to see,
 How happy, happy, happy,
 How happy I should be!"

Amid the city's constant din,
 A man who round the world had been,
 Who, 'mid the tumult and the throng,
 Is thinking, thinking all day long.
 "Oh, could I only tread once more
 The field-path to the farm-house door,
 The old green meadow could I see,
 How happy, happy, happy,
 How happy I should be!"

MARION DOUGLASS.

...rene and settled majesty in forest scenery that enters into the soul, and dilates and elevates it, and fills it with noble inclinations. The ancient and hereditary groves, too, which everywhere abound, are most of them full of story. They are haunted by the recollections of the great spirits of past ages who have sought relaxation among them from the tumult of arms or the toils of state, or have wooed the muse beneath their shade.

RAIN ON THE ROOF.

WHEN the humid shadows hover
Over all the starry spheres,
And the melancholy darkness
Gently weeps in rainy tears,
What a bliss to press the pillow
Of a cottage-chamber bed,
And to listen to the patter
Of the soft rain overhead!

Every tinkle on the shingles
Has an echo in the heart;
And a thousand dreamy fancies
Into busy being start,
And a thousand recollections
Weave their air-threads into woof,
As I listen to the patter
Of the rain upon the roof.

Now in memory comes my mother
As she used long years ago
To regard the darling dreamers
Ere she left them till the dawn;
Oh, I see her leaning o'er me,
As I list to this refrain
Which is played upon the shingles
By the patter of the rain.

Then my little seraph sister,
With her wings and wavy hair
And her star-eyed cherub brother
A serene angelic pair!—
Glide around my wakeful pillow,
With their praise or mild reproof
As I listen to the murmur
Of the soft rain on the roof.

And another comes to thrill me
With her eyes' delicious blue;
And I mind not, musing on her,
That her heart was all untrue;
I remember but to love her,
With a passion kin to pain,
And my heart's quick pulses vibrate
To the patter of the rain.

And hath naught of tone or cadence
That can work with such a spell
In the soul's mysterious fountains,
Whence the tears of rapture well
As that melody of nature,
That subdued, subduing strain
Which is played upon the shingles
By the patter of the rain.

COATES —

THE DEAD HOUSE.

HERE once my step was quickened,
Here beckoned the open door,
And welcome thrilled from the threshold
To the foot it had known before.

A glow came forth to meet me
From the flame that laughed in the grate,
And shadows a dance on the ceiling,
Danced blither with mine for a mate.

"I claim you, old friend," yawned the arm-chair,
"This corner, you know, is your seat;"
"Rest your slippers on me," beamed the fender,
"I brighten at touch of your feet;"

"We know the practised finger,"
Said the books, "that seem like brain;"
And the shy page rustled the secret
It had kept till I came again.

Sang the pillow, "My down once quickened
On nightingales' throats that flew
Through moonlit gardens of Hafiz
To gather quaint dreams for you."

Ah me, where the past sowed heart's-ease,
The present plucks rue for us men!
I come back: that scar unhealing
Was not in the churchyard then.

But, I think, the house is unaltered;
I will go and beg to look
At the rooms that were once familiar
To my life as its bed to a brook.

Unaltered! Alas for the sameness
That makes the change but more!
'Tis a dead man I see in the mirrors,
'Tis his tread that chills the floor!

To learn such a simple lesson,
Need I go to Paris and Rome,
That the many make the household,
But only one the home?

'Twas just a womanly presence,
An influence unexpressed,
But a rose she had worn, on my grave-sod
Were more than long life with the rest!

'Twas a smile, 'twas a garment's rustle,
'Twas nothing that I can phrase,
But the whole dumb dwelling grew conscious,
And put on her looks and ways.

Were it mine, I would close the shutters,
Like lids when the life is fled,
And the funeral fire should wind it,
This corpse of a home that is dead.

For it died that autumn morning
When she, its soul, was borne
To lie all dark on the hillside
That looks over woodland and corn.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.



MEMORY.

TIS beautiful night ; the stars look brightly
down
Upon the earth, decked in her robe of
snow.
No light gleams at the windows, save
my own,

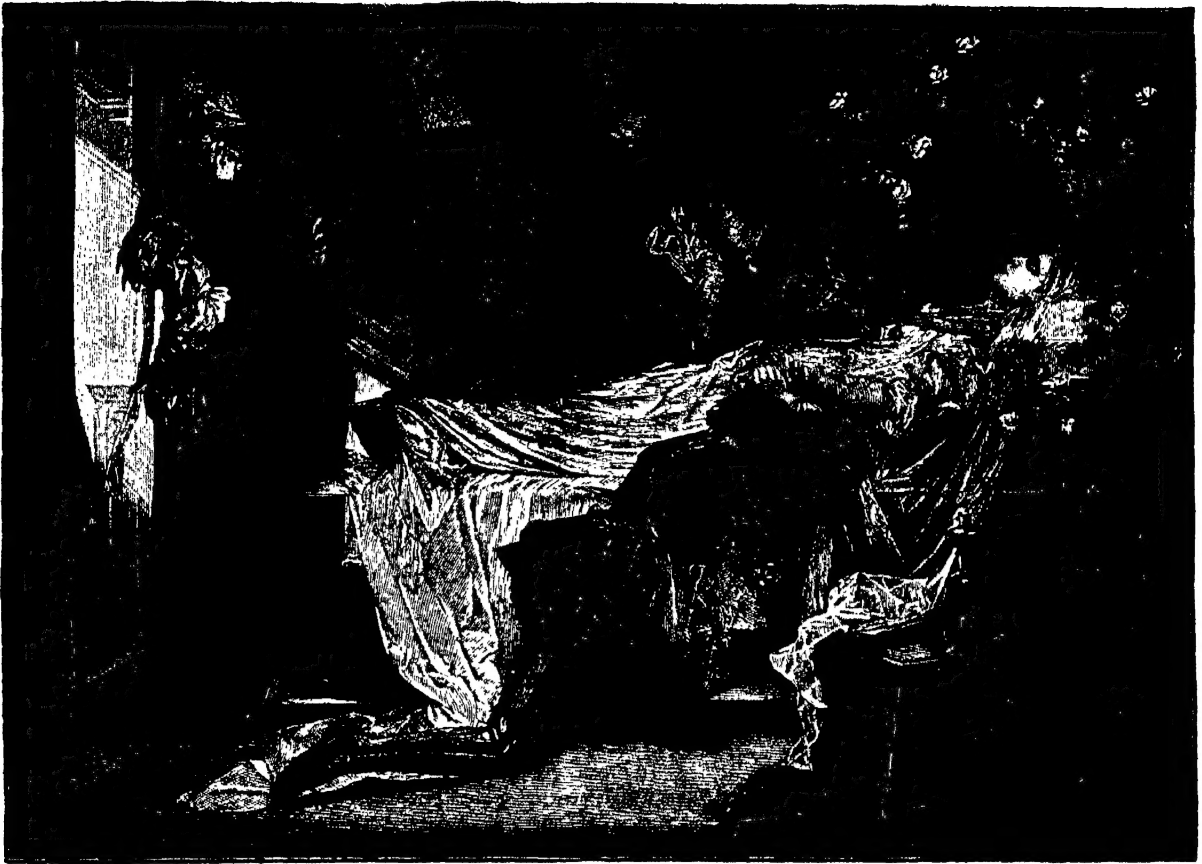
Which gives its cheer to midnight and to me,
And now, with noiseless step, sweet memory comes
And leads me gently through her twilight realms.
What poet's tuneful lyre has ever sung,
Or delicate pencil e'er portrayed
The enchanted, shadowy land where memory dwells?
It has its valleys, cheerless, lone, and drear,
Dark-shaded by the mournful cypress tree ;
And yet its sunlit mountain tops are bathed
In heaven's own blue. Upon its craggy cliffs,
Robed in the dreamy light of distant years,
Are clustered joys serene of other days.
Upon its gently sloping hillsides bend
The weeping willows o'er the sacred dust
Of dear departed ones ; yet in that land,
Where'er our footsteps fall upon the shore,
They that were sleeping rise from out the dust
Of death's long, silent years, and round us stand
As erst they did before the prison tomb
Received their clay within its voiceless halls.
The heavens that bend above that land are hung
With clouds of various hues. Some dark and chill,

Surcharged with sorrow, cast their sombre shade
Upon the sunny, joyous land below.
Others are floating through the dreamy air,
White as the falling snow, their margins tinged
With gold and crimsoned hues ; their shadows fall
Upon the flowery meads and sunny slopes,
Soft as the shadow of an angel's wing.
When the rough battle of the day is done,
And evening's peace falls gently on the heart,
I bound away, across the noisy years,
Unto the utmost verge of memory's land,
Where earth and sky in dreamy distance meet,
And memory dim with dark oblivion joins ;
Where woke the first remembered sounds that fell
Upon the ear of childhood's early morn ;
And, wandering thence along the rolling years,
I see the shadow of my former self
Gliding from childhood up to man's estate,
The path of youth winds down through many a vale
And on the brink of many a dread abyss,
From out whose darkness comes no ray of light,
Save that a phantom dances o'er the gulf
And beckons toward the verge. Again the path
Leads o'er the summit where the sunbeams fall ;
And thus in light and shade, sunshine and gloom,
Sorrow and joy, this life-path leads along.

JAMES A. GARFIELD.

A BOSOM empty of a heart of pain makes a lustreless life ; but a bosom in which a heart bleeds reveals hidden virtues.

WHAT a desolate place would be this world without a flower ! It would be a face without a smile, - a east without a welcome ! Are not flowers the stars of the earth ? and are not our stars the flowers of heaven ?



THE DEATH-BED.

WE watched her breathing through the
 night—
 Her breathing soft and low—
 As in her breast the wave of life
 Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seemed to speak,
 So slowly moved about,
 As we had lent her half our powers
 To eke her living out.

Our weary hopes belied our fears,
 Our fears our hopes belied ;
 We thought her dying when she slept,
 And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came, dim and sad,
 And chill with early showers,
 Her quiet eyelids closed ; she had
 Another morn than ours.

THOMAS HOOD.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

AS the member of an infant empire, as a philanthropist by character, and, if I may be allowed the expression, as a citizen of the great republic of Humanity at large, I cannot help turning my attention sometimes to this subject, *how mankind may be connected, like one great family, in fraternal ties*. I indulge a fond, perhaps an enthusiastic idea, that as the world is evidently much less barbarous than it has been, its melioration must still be progressive ; that nations are becoming more humanized in their policy ; that the subjects of ambition and causes for hostility are daily diminishing ; and, in fine, that the period is not very remote when the benefits of a liberal and free commerce will pretty generally succeed to the devastations and horrors of war.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.



"THOU ART AROUND US IN OUR PEACEFUL HOME"

THE HOUR OF DEATH.

LEAVES have their time to fall,—
And flowers to wither at the north wind's
breath,
And stars to set—but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O
Death!

Day is for mortal care;
Eve, for glad meetings round the joyous hearth;
Night, for the dreams of sleep, the voice of prayer;
But all for thee, thou mightiest of the earth.

The banquet hath its hour—
Its feverish hour—of mirth and song and wine;
There comes a day for grief's o'erwhelming power,
A time for softer tears—but all are thine.

Youth and the opening rose
May look like things too glorious for decay,
And smile at thee—but thou art not of those
That wait the signet blessing to seal their race.

